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KERSALEC

By Justus Miles Forman

THE Earl of Strobe was an irascible old gentleman, of intimidating aspect and appalling frankness of speech, who was somewhat widely known for two reasons: because he was the grandfather of that famous beauty, Isabeau de Monsigny, and because he possessed a phenomenal bodily strength, far beyond that of ordinary men, which he preserved to the very end of his long life, and of which he was inordinately vain. He was wont to divide his time, during the latter part of his life, between Strobe Manor in Devonshire and Château Monsigny, which lies near Versailles; but July and August he liked to pass in a castle which he owned in Brittany, in the remotest corner of Finistère—a grim old thirteenth-century stronghold, overhanging an ever stormy sea, on the Pointe du Van.

Why any human being should have chosen to build a habitation on this gale-swept, sea-drenched fist of granite, is beyond conjecture; but there are two castles on the Pointe, with the sea crashing two hundred feet below them. And you may see them when you go, with the other tourists, from Audierne to the Pointe du Raz, to set foot upon the northwesternmost reach of Europe. They sit on their crags just to the east of you, across that innocent-looking gulf of horror, the Baie des Trépassés, where the currents bear, each year, scores of wrecked vessels and hundreds of mangled corpses. You may even reach them in an hour or two of walking, along the cliffs and over the rocks.

The nearer one of the two—it rises from a great boss of rock beside the Baie des Trépassés—is Château Ker-

salec, and it belonged to Jean de Kersalec, the last marquis of the oldest house in Brittany. The other stronghold is the property of the Earl of Strobe, and it sits upon the very extremity of the Pointe du Van, with the open sea before it and the great Baie de Douarnenez on its right.

Between the two castles there is a mile of open moor, with the little chapel of St. They set midway on the cliff—a mile of open moor, stone-scattered, where nothing can grow but patches of heather an inch high, and that gorse which, inland, grows waist-high and makes the most impenetrable hedge in the world. And, behind, there is naked moor also, for, in Winter and in all times of storm, the sea-foam is blown inland for miles, and covers the soil with salt, so that no tree or shrub can live.

"Aye, it is bleak," the old earl would say, with a laugh; "you will find no bleaker spot in Europe. I dare say that is why I like it. I'm bleak, too—and a bit stormy. Moreover, I like to be alone. Isabeau's chatter is a great trial to me." And he would laugh again, for it was well known that he and his beautiful granddaughter, who had been lately married, adored each other.

But, though the earl was fond of saying that he liked to be alone, he had, from time to time, a number of guests at Château Kerval, and he amused himself greatly with their painstaking efforts to extract entertainment from rocks and gorse and sea-gulls.

And, too, he had fallen into the habit of walking over, of an afternoon,

to Château Kersalec for an informal call and a cup of tea. He disliked the marquis, but, like most old men of his type, he was very fond of young women, the freshness and sweetness of whose girlhood were not yet past. The Marquise Aurélie was much younger than her husband, not more than one- or two-and-twenty, and, besides being an extremely pretty woman, she had numberless little girlish tricks and mannerisms, which constantly reminded the earl of Isabeau de Monsigny. Further, he suspected that she was very much ennuyée, as any young woman might well be, of Château Kersalec and of all the bleak, dreary, storm-swept country; and he believed that the calls of even an old man might be a welcome diversion.

It happened, one year, that the earl was summoned to Paris, upon matters of importance, in the midst of his customary stay at the Pointe du Van, so that, when he returned, it was well along in August. He crossed the moor, on the day following his arrival, to call at Kersalec.

Now, on the landward side of the castle, facing the avenue and the gardens which the marquise and her gardeners had made to grow behind the shelter of stone walls, there is a high, paved terrace, railed about by a stone balustrade, and protected by the L which the walls make about two of its sides. The long windows and the door of a suite of rooms open upon it, and a flight of steps descends from it to the avenue.

It was here that the marquise sat much of the time when the weather was fair, quite alone, reading, or else, in the good old feudal fashion, with a maid or two near her, sewing. But the earl was surprised to see, as he came up the avenue, that there was another woman beside the tea-table with the marquise, and that the woman was unmistakably a lady. He was surprised, for de Kersalec was known as a recluse who hated to be disturbed, and who never had guests at the château.

The marquise rose, with a little cry

of welcome, and came down the step, with her two hands outstretched.

"Eet is so ver', ver' good to see you aggain! Bot so *ver'* good!" she insisted. "Me, I 'ave been *désolée* all thees time, *désolée*! An'—an' Jean, too," she added, hastily, "'e 'as been *désolé* al-so."

The earl's grim mouth twitched a bit, at the thought of Jean's sorrow over his absence, but he took the marquise's two hands in his, and shook them up and down, delightedly, till that young person was forced to scream with pain. For the earl was always forgetting how strong he was, and breaking the things about him, quite absent-mindedly.

"Eh, what, what?" he demanded, in alarm. "What is the matter? Did I hurt you? Ah, now, I am sorry. You ought to tell me, when you see me touch anything, to have a care. I forget. I expect I am growing old."

The marquise laughed, rubbing her crushed fingers.

"Ah, now, you are feeshing, monsieur!" said she. "An' me, I shall not bite. Bot, I shall be ver', ver' kin', jus' the same. I shall present you to my frien' w'at 'as come to Kersalec to make me less lonely, w'en monsieur is so cruel an' goes away to Paris."

The earl took the hand which the other woman held out to him, with a puzzled frown. "I am quite certain," said he, "that the Countess zu Ehrenstern and I have met before, but I cannot be sure where or when. It is once more evident that I am growing old."

The Countess Varvara zu Ehrenstern was a very handsome woman, who might have been anywhere between twenty-five and thirty. She was Russian by birth, and her blue eyes were set very slightly at the Tartar angle. She had the yellow hair, the short, full mouth, and the faintly widened cheek-bones of the Slavs.

"If you are growing old, Lord Strope," said she, "you do it amazingly well. I have seen many old men, but none of them like you. However, my memory is better than yours."

We met three years ago, at a court ball in Vienna. That was while my husband was living, and he told me afterward about your lifting a great onyx-and-gold table, in the smoking-room, on a wager—a table that no one of the others could even stir.”

“Ah, yes, I remember,” said the earl, laughing. “The wager was for a thousand crowns. I bought Isabeau some little pearls with it. I, too, remember all about meeting you, now. It was the British ambassador who presented me to you and to your husband. I had not heard of your husband’s death, but I knew him for a fine soldier. How well you Russians speak English, countess—absolutely without accent!”

The Marquise de Kersalec made a face over her tea-cup. “Eet is a ogly language,” she said, with dignity. “Me, I ’ate it, an’ I shall not speak one word more to-day. Eef you weesh to in-clude me in your—your *causerie*, you shall speak French.” And she looked quite as fierce and determined as an exceedingly pretty woman, who is not fierce by nature, can look.

“Why, then,” said the old gentleman, setting down his empty cup, with a sigh, “why, then, French, if you like, marquise, though, I protest, French is little to my taste. I feel like a ballet-dancer in it—and I dance very badly, too,” he growled, with retrospective venom.

The picture of the old Earl of Strobe as a ballet-dancer upset the gravity of the marquise, but she hastily gave him more tea, and avoided, with great care, the Tartar eyes of Varvara zu Ehrenstern.

“Ah!” said the earl, suddenly, after a little silence devoted to the consumption of tea and cake, “I came very near forgetting my special reason for coming over here—and for that you two ladies may lay the blame either to your own engrossing charms, or to the inroads of senility upon a mind once hale and strong. I, too, am to have a visitor. Upon my word, the Pointe du Van is becoming a social centre! We must have a casino.”

“But you used to have many visitors,” protested the marquise; “half-a-dozen at a time.”

The old gentleman chuckled over his tea-cup. “They never come twice, marquise,” said he. “And I have very nearly gone through the list of those I should care to ask. They come expecting the ordinary sort of seaside place—bathing, music, tables, and all that. Of course, they find none of it. There is no music save what they make themselves, and there is no bathing, because the only sand for miles is in the Baie des Trépassés”—the marquise crossed herself—and I won’t let them try to bathe there, on account of the current. So, after two or three days, they make their excuses, and leave me alone again. The last time a party was here, one of the women fell among the rocks, and broke her leg. We had a great deal of trouble hoisting her back to safety. I have sent no invitations of late. But the man who is coming to stop with me this time—I expect him in a day or two—is not looking for amusements, and he and I are very congenial. He is not in the least a fool, and that is rare among young men, to-day. He held a commission, at one time, in a cavalry regiment, but he has been in the diplomatic service for three or four years. A very close friend of his, a man for whom he cared more than most men ever care for anything, died a month or two ago, and he is much cut up over it. I asked him here to give him a sort of change. It may do him good. I should be very glad if you could help me to make it pleasant for him. Indeed, countess, it is most fortunate for me that you are here, since I am to have a young man on my hands. The marquise, being a married woman, is, you may say, out of the running, to a certain extent.”

The marquise laughed, but her face turned grave again, with a tender and very beautiful sympathy.

“We shall be glad,” said she, “but most glad, to do anything we can, here at Kersalec, to make his stay pleasant. I think I like your visitor

already, Lord Strope. One who is capable of a great love for a friend must be a good man. You must bring him here very often; must he not, Varvara? *Mais, tiens!* you have not told us his name."

"Eh, what?" cried the old gentleman; "what? didn't I tell you his name? Berkeley—Captain Berkeley. Robert is his first name. He is quite well known socially about the Continent, through having been in the diplomatic service. Then, too, the family is a good one. He is cousin to the Duke of Exmoor."

Varvara zu Ehrenstern gave a quick little cry of surprise, and turned toward the marquise, but the marquise was looking away. Then, there was a silence which presently grew significant and awkward, while the old earl shifted his eyes from one to the other of the two women, frowning a bit, and working his great eyebrows up and down like a gorilla, as was his habit when puzzled or very thoughtful.

"What is it?" he demanded, after a time, in his abrupt fashion. "What is the matter? Have I said anything out of the way? Does either of you know Berkeley? What is wrong with him?"

The marquise looked up, without smiling. "No, monsieur," said she, "neither of us knows Captain Berkeley, though I think the countess has seen him; but he bears—*n'est-ce pas?*—rather an ill name in some places, the name of—of—no, not *marcheur*—something a little above that—the name of professional lover, monsieur, the name of a man who spends his life in making women care for him—and all for amusement, a heart-breaker—is that what you call them? One who makes a woman care, and then laughs and goes away. Ah, monsieur, I cannot like, or respect, that sort of man. He seems to me almost worse than the man who carries his heartlessness further, and is condemned by everybody. When a woman's heart is broken, what matters anything else? It is very curious that Varvara and I should have been speaking of this

Captain Berkeley not an hour ago. A name we saw in a paper brought his name up. It was that which made Varvara cry out."

The earl made a little gesture of impatience. "My dear lady," said he, "will you let an old man say that you are talking very great nonsense? In the first place, Berkeley's reputation as a heart-breaker is greatly exaggerated—such things always are. He may have had half-a-dozen love-affairs with women whose names were great enough to make the thing seem much more important than it was; but that Berkeley acted like a gentleman through them all, I have never heard questioned. Also, I have never heard that any of his affairs partook of any—any impropriety. He is a ladies' man, of a sort—that I don't deny; but he is far from being the ordinary type of ladies' man. He is not in the least a fool, as I said just now. Some men, by a peculiarity in their mental construction, seem fated to be, all their lives, storm-centres of sentiment, just as others, by a different mental peculiarity, become storm-centres of war, or politics, or a thousand other things. Berkeley is not, apparently, a sentimental man at all, but he has often been mixed up in cases of misplaced affection—either as suitor or *tertium quid*. And, in the next place, marquise, you will have to look far among your friends to find a man who does not deserve a worse name than Robert Berkeley bears. Berkeley's *affaires du cœur* have happened to be, nearly all, with very well-known women, but they have never, I believe, been such as a gentleman may not experience with untarnished honor. Few men can boast so much. You are very unjust."

He rose to his feet, still frowning, and took up his hat and stick. "I am very sorry," he continued, "that this should have come up, because, of course, it makes it impossible for me to bring Berkeley here. He will be a great loser."

But the marquise, also, sprang up, and put her hands upon his arm.

"Ah, no; ah, no!" she cried, with a little, penitent smile; "no; monsieur, I did not mean to say so much! I did not mean it. You shall bring him here. You *must*, or—or I shall come to Kerval for him. Figure to yourself! Ah, no, monsieur, I did not mean it! I do not admire that sort of man, no; I think what he does is wicked. But all men are so, yes? And, perhaps, he is not so bad as they say. Bring him to us, monsieur; bring him to us. Then, I shall know that I am forgiven."

The earl looked toward Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and that young woman's Tartar eyes sparkled with excitement.

"I think," said she, slowly, and she smiled, "I think I should like to know Captain Berkeley, Lord Strobe. I saw him, once, in Berlin. It was at something official, but I did not meet him. Yes," she said again, with her slow smile, "yes, I think I should like very much to meet him. He looked interesting. No, he is not a fool."

The old earl burst suddenly into one of his great laughs, and held out his hand. "You shall meet him," said he. "Poor Berkeley! Countess, I see the light of battle in your eyes, and I bow to the sporting instinct. It is worth bowing to. Also, my memory begins to clear."

A swift little flash of pallor, which was gone in an instant, spread over the Russian's face, but her eyes burned into the earl's.

"What do you mean?" she asked, very low; "what do you mean?"

"Nothing, my dear lady," answered the old gentleman, laughing still, and shaking his white head; "nothing at all. Don't begrudge an old man his little jokes—or memories."

He turned to the marquise, and made his adieus, bowing over her hand with his fine, old-fashioned courtesy.

"You are very kind, madame," said he, "as I knew you would be. You are as good as you are beautiful—though that is saying a great deal. Robert Berkeley is not fit to lift his

eyes to you, but then, alas! no one is. We can't pick our friends here below, madame. We must take what God gives us, and love them for what is best in them—not seeing the rest. I shall bring Captain Berkeley to Kersalec. Do you be kind to him, and the countess merciful. I must be going my way."

He went down through the gardens, stopping here and there to admire the flowers that nestled behind the protecting walls—hydrangeas and geraniums and many varieties of carnations, and the blue larkspurs—*pies d'alouettes*—which were his special fancy. Their brightness and their mingled odors seemed strangely alien, exotic, in this barren land. It seemed almost wrong to bring them here.

And so, by a little wooden door in the wall at the garden's foot, he came out upon the stone-strewn moor, and walked slowly homeward across the heather. He paused a moment before the tiny white chapel of St. They. The ever-encroaching sea had cut away the rock, which happened at this point to be soft and broken, to within a few yards of the encircling wall, and the earl thought, absently, that if the chapel were not moved soon, a few more years would see the end of it.

He went into the little stone-enclosed shrine, which stands to the westward, on the cliff's edge—the fountain of Notre Dame de St. They—where the rudely carved stone Virgin sits over a pool of stagnant water. The statue is draped in strings of trumpery copper crosses and medallions, which the pilgrim, or the pious traveler, takes away as holy souvenirs, leaving on the shelf below a few sous, or a piece of fifty centimes, or even a franc, for the support of the chapel.

And the earl, half-smiling, took one of the little medallions and a tiny cross, leaving, on the stone shelf beneath the staring Madonna, a piece of ten francs. And, after he

had sat for some time on the worn curb, now quiet, now talking to himself aloud, he rose once more and took up his walk.

It was not much after six, but the sun, which, in a clear sky, should not have set till half-past seven, was already hidden, and, from the southwest, a wind had risen, keen and cold, with a rack of gray clouds. It was a storm quarter. There would be a sea to-morrow.

He turned in through the outer wall of Kerval, and, crossing the great courtyard to the castle, went at once to his study, where a servant had already made lights, and was waiting to take his master's hat and stick. And the earl sat there a long time, quite still, thinking of the Marquise de Kersalec and of her curiously impossible standards for mankind.

"She has never been in love with anybody," he said, aloud—for he refused even to consider the possibility of such a woman's loving a man like de Kersalec; "she has never been in love with anybody. She is, in most respects, a girl, with a girl's odd, fantastic dreams and ideals. Some day, she will fall in love, and then—God help her!—she will have a different set of measures. I hope she will be kind to Berkeley. He needs a bit of petting just now."

Then, he fell to thinking of Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and he laughed again as he remembered how he had frightened her by a chance word. He enjoyed frightening people.

"I think I shall like that Russian woman very much," he said, again aloud. "She is very handsome in some poses, and I fancy she knows rather a good deal. She is not an ingénue by any means. I think I shall like her. I wonder"—and he laughed once more—"how she and Robert Berkeley will get on. She certainly had a warlike look in her eye. At any rate, she will meet her match, and so will he. It might be entertaining to watch them, I should think—very entertaining. Oh, we shall have a bit of interest at the

Pointe du Van, after all." And he went up-stairs, smiling with a certain grim amusement, to dress for his lonely dinner.

II

CAPTAIN BERKELEY reached Kerval on the second day after this. He came from Paris, through Rennes to Quimper, and from Quimper to Audierne by Douarnenez. And this latter part of the journey took him through a country new and strange to him. He had traveled much, and he was not easily impressed, or even interested, but this alien land kept his eyes at the window of his carriage. There were great stretches of stony moorland, where it seemed that nothing could thrive but heather. And the hills, too, were red with heather. There were stubble fields where the grain stood in sheaves ready for harvest, and there were patches of cabbages, and squares of that pride of Brittany, the *blé noir*, white as snow. There were pine-trees and, sometimes, oak; and, everywhere, the thorny gorse—gorse growing low and close on the hillsides, gorse growing thick and high in acres on the moors, and gorse crowning the hedges of stone and earth; for it is with this impenetrable gorse that the granite of Brittany is clothed.

There were women in great, white linen coifs, looped and bizarre—brown-faced women, with light hair and blue eyes and wide cheek-bones. Some of them were beautiful. And there were men with shaven faces and keen eyes, men wearing queer jackets, fine with gold braid, and low, wide-brimmed hats with a velvet ribbon hanging down behind.

Berkeley had among his things a book, which he had meant to read; but, when he changed trains at Douarnenez, he found its leaves still uncut.

The earl met him with a trap at Audierne, and drove him ten miles or more, out to the Pointe, through queer little stone villages, and past ancient crosses of granite, monuments which

stood aloft to bless a four corners, storm-beaten and moss-grown, each bearing on high a twisted figure of agony, each inscribed alike at its base, "*O—Crux—Ave—Spes—Unica.*"

They came, at last, to a gray old castle, which hung over a scarred cliff, two hundred feet and more above snarling breakers, a castle stern and unhandsome of outline, built out of the granite of Brittany to breast Brittany's storms.

Servants came to take the horses, and to carry in the guest's luggage—dark-faced men, with great, brooding eyes, and wearing the same odd dress that Berkeley had noticed before.

"For Frenchmen," said he to the earl, "these people look as un-French as any one could imagine. Neither the men nor the women have anything Latin about their faces."

"French?" returned the old gentleman, with a laugh. "They are no more French than you or I, in spite of the fact that they live in France. The Bretons are the purest Celts alive. They are own brothers to the Welsh, and cousins to the Irish and Scotch. There are over a million of them in Finistère and Morbihan who do not even understand French."

The two crossed the paved courtyard, and passed through many suites of rooms, stone-arched and stone-walled, up and down flights of worn steps—for the castle was built on the slope of the cliff, so that no two of the rooms seemed on the same level—and so out upon an open balcony above the sea.

The view was grand beyond words. Below them, points of rock thrust out into the sea, like the fingers of a giant hand, and over them the waves broke in a smother of foam that dashed fifty feet and more up the cliff side, and snarled and fell back again. There was but a moderate wind, and the sea was not rough.

"If there were anything of a sea, we could not stand here," explained the earl. "The foam blows well over the turrets of the castle, in a storm. We often find mussel-shells and sea-

weed here on the balcony, after a blow; and the balcony is a good two hundred feet above high water. That light-house out yonder on the rock," he went on, "is the Tévennec. One sees eight, or ten, lights from here at night. This is the Baie de Douarnenez, here at the right, and the long point to the left, with the signal station, is the Pointe du Raz. Tourists go there a good bit, to see the storms. And the castle yonder is Château Kersalec. The Marquis and Marquise de Kersalec live there."

"Ah, you have neighbors, then!" said Berkeley. "De Kersalec? The name is not French."

"No, they're Bretons right enough," explained the old gentleman, "and very proud of it, too. The family has lived here for many centuries. It is one of the oldest titles in France. Indeed—" he paused a moment to laugh—"indeed, de Kersalec claims direct descent from the Roi d'Is."

Young Berkeley made a little exclamation of amused astonishment. "The King of Is?" he cried. "But, my word, there never was any Is! It is a legend, a fable. No one believes that such a city ever really existed."

"That is as you like it," said the earl, still laughing. "There are plenty of people to agree with you. As for me, I confess I have lived here long enough to take the city of Is half-way seriously. I dare say, one breathes in superstition with the air in Brittany. At any rate, there is no doubt that a great city was destroyed hereabouts, in the middle of the sixth century, by an incursion of the sea. Whether or not the city was *la ville d'Is*, and whether or not it was destroyed for its sins, as the tale goes, you must decide for yourself. You can't shake the belief of the Bretons that such a city existed right down here, where the Baie de Douarnenez lies to-day, and that the king escaped to the mountain Menez-Hom yonder, and died later at Landévennec."

Young Berkeley looked down at the sea which covered the palaces of Is, and shook an argumentative

head. "It is a pretty tale," said he; "many of the Celtic legends are. But for a sane man to claim descent from a mythical king seems bizarre. He must be a strange sort."

"De Kersalec is a strange sort," agreed the earl. "The few who know him think him a bit touched. That is as may be. At any rate, he is an unneighborly beggar; shuts himself up in his library most of the time. He is writing a book about his illustrious ancestor and the city of Is. Claims to have a lot of family records that are going to clear the whole mystery, and all that sort of thing. He is a genuine Breton, soaked in superstition, a dreamer, a mystic and a child. He has no sense of humor, at all."

"You said there was a marquise," suggested Berkeley.

"There is," said the old gentleman, "and she is a child, too, but there are few lovelier women alive. She reminds me very strongly, at times, of Isabeau de Monsigny. She has asked me to take you over there, to Kersalec. By the way, she has a visitor at present, a young widow, Russian by birth, German by marriage. I think you two should get on famously. She is a very handsome woman. Her name is Varvara zu Ehrenstern."

Young Berkeley looked puzzled. "I have heard of her, somewhere," said he, thoughtfully, "but when or how I cannot imagine. At any rate, I shall be very glad to call at Château Kersalec. It sounds an interesting household."

Then, for a long time, he was quite silent, leaning upon his arms over the gray stone balustrade, where pale-green sea-moss clung, and staring down into the driven sea. And the Earl of Strobe, silent also, watched him, thinking how great a change had come over him during the past six months. He was a young man, as the earl had said to the ladies at Kersalec, between thirty and thirty-five, but he looked older, for the circles under his eyes had deepened, and all the lines of his strong, lean

face seemed more plainly marked. He had a very tired and careworn look, as if his interest in things had ceased. He was not a handsome man; in so far as beauty of feature goes, he was rather ugly. But, on first seeing him, one looked at him for a long time, and looked at him again, and found his face a curiously interesting study; and one wondered what lay hidden behind his strangely quiet eyes and unchanging immobility of expression. His figure was lean and tall, with wide shoulders, and movements that suggested great bodily strength, though he was, in reality, no stronger than most men of athletic tastes. He had the Saxon coloring of eyes and hair; but his skin was tanned and weather-beaten to a copper brown.

As the earl watched him, noting how he had grown older and quieter and, somehow, a little bitter, the old nobleman wondered if the loss of one friend, however dear, could so wholly alter a man.

After a time, young Berkeley straightened himself, and turned toward his companion, with a little sigh. "That is very fine down there," he said, sweeping a hand outward to the sea. "There's something immeasurably big and powerful and resistless about it, that—that does a chap good. It was very jolly of you to ask me here. I think I should be another man in a week, if I could just sit here and have that sea banging away all about me. Poor old Reverley would have liked it. Ah, yes, he'd have been very keen on it!"

He turned seaward again, frowning out at the strong, fresh wind. "It—rests a chap, somehow," said he, slowly. "Eh, what? It—it smoothes down his nerves. It must be very fine to be like you, sir, quite without nerves. I used not to have any; but, lately, I—they've got hold of me, just a bit."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, "that is due to poor Reverley's death. That took it out of you very badly, I know."

"Yes, oh, yes," said Berkeley, nodding seaward; "yes, that took it out of me. We were rather more than ordinary pals, we two. And, then—well, I suppose the general futility of things hits every chap in the face now and again. I've led a precious-useless, precious-foolish sort of existence, you know. I've never done anything worth while, that I can remember, and I've brought suffering, quite needlessly, to several people. It has all been coming home to roost—like the curses—of late. I am not particularly pleased with myself."

But the Earl of Strobe clapped a great hand upon the other's shoulder, and shook him. "Nonsense, man!" he cried, in his gruff voice; "nonsense! You've an attack of nerves, and that is all. We shall give you a change here—all the sea you care to sit and look at—we've plenty of sea. And, to-morrow, I mean to take you over to Kersalec, by way of variety. Nonsense! We shall have you your old self again, in a week. And say no more about never having done anything worth while; or, at least, say it to some one else, for I know too well what you have done."

Young Berkeley swung about, with a laugh. "Did you think I was going to have a go of nerves, right here on your hands, sir?" he cried. "Not I! And, further, I think your cure has already begun. To-morrow, then, we go to Château Kersalec. You must tell me more about your handsome Russian with the German name. I shall try to cut you out. By Jove! I feel a prophetic tug at the heart-strings already, and before I've seen her! Alas, my heart-strings have felt so many tugs! And, after all, she probably won't fancy me, at all. I do not, as a rule, attract women. Shall we dress for dinner, sir?"

III

"Good afternoon, countess," said the Earl of Strobe. "You appear to

be reigning alone, for the moment. May I come up? I have brought Captain Berkeley with me, according to instructions. He is unworthy of your esteem, but I trust you will be kind to him—and, above all, merciful—for my sake.

"Captain Berkeley, the Countess zu Ehrenstern permits me to do you the honor of presenting you to her. But where is the hostess?" the earl continued. "I trust she did not lock herself into a tower at our approach."

"Ah, poor Aurélie!" cried the countess. "She is ill, Lord Strobe. No, really and truly ill," she laughed, in answer to the earl's look. "She caught cold the other evening, from sitting out here on the terrace too long after the sun went down, and, in consequence, she has a fever. No, it is nothing of importance, *une affaire de deux ou trois jours*, but I am keeping her in bed. Shall I give you some tea? It is Russian tea, to-day, out of my own box and my own samovar, and you shall have no sugar or milk in it—just a slice of lemon."

The earl made a face of frank distaste. "They tried, one Winter in Petersburg, to make me like Russian tea," said he, "but absolutely without success. I shall retreat in good order. I have my trap and a groom at the foot of the avenue, and, if you will allow it, I shall leave this young man alone and unprotected in your hands. I have to go in to Audierne; they wish to see me at the *mairie*—heaven knows why. No, I won't have any tea, thank you, not even the Christian sort. I must be off at once. Will you give my respects and my heartiest wishes for an early recovery to the marquise?"

He went down the long avenue toward the east gate, and the other two stood by the balustrade of the terrace, watching him.

"What a splendid old man!" said the Countess zu Ehrenstern, "and what an extraordinary one! I doubt if there is another like him in the world. One would know how strong he is, merely to see him walk." Indeed, the earl did not walk like an old man, though at

this time he must have been two- or three-and-eighty; but as all very strong men walk, with a sinuous, animal grace, swinging his great shoulders with the slightest possible swagger.

"They say," the countess went on, "that he has a most irascible temper, and flies into dreadful rages all in a moment; but I have seen no signs of it as yet."

"You probably will," laughed young Berkeley. "He really has an abominable temper, but I fancy his rages are more pretense than reality, half of the time. He loves to frighten people."

Varvara zu Ehrenstern took a quick breath. "He frightened me the other day," said she, "by suggesting that he knew about a certain—a certain bit of—history."

If Berkeley had been carefully watching, at just this moment, he might have noticed that the countess's spoon halted, for an instant, halfway to her lips, and that her eyes did not leave his face. It might have occurred to him that she wished to discover whether or not the earl had said anything to him about the matter. But young Berkeley's face expressed nothing but a polite interest, and she drew a little sigh of relief.

"Your cup is empty," she continued. "Will you have Russian tea this time, or 'Christian' tea?"

"Russian, thanks," said Berkeley. "I happen to be fond of it. I have lived about on the Continent so much that I am fond of all sorts of things not in the least English."

"Ah, yes," said she; "you have been about a great deal, have you not? You see, I have heard of you for a long time, though we never managed to meet. We have many friends in common, I think. But how does it happen that you were willing to come out here to Finistère, and bury yourself in the gorse and heather? You have been always such an *attaché* of courts and smart watering-places! I don't understand."

"Why, madame," said Captain Berkeley, bowing, "my coming I had thought a whim, following upon Lord

Strope's invitation; but, now, I know it for an undeserved dispensation of Providence. I shall take an early opportunity to express my gratitude to Providence."

The countess leaned back in her chair of osier, clapping her hands, in dumb show. "*Ça commence!*" she cried, in a delighted tone. And Captain Berkeley, making field-glasses of his hands, gravely regarded the distant moor, as one might watch a racing course.

"They're off!" said he.

"It was a prompt start," murmured the Countess zu Ehrenstern, "such a *very* prompt start! Sometimes, one wastes such a lot of time in—in—"

"Jockeying," prompted Captain Berkeley, surreptitiously slipping a lump of sugar into his tea.

"Jockeying—precisely," she agreed.

"I was taught, very early in life," said Captain Berkeley, "to emulate the little busy bee. Most of the maxims in my copy-books vaunted the folly of wasting time. One of them went, 'Lost: one golden Hour, set with sixty diamond Minutes.' I do not think I was an uncommonly avaricious child, but that line made a great impression upon me."

And, inwardly, he was saying, "No, when you are looking straight at one, your face is a trifle too broad and square, especially across the cheek-bones; but, turned away, ever so little, it is very fine. You just escape being a beauty."

"Yes," said the countess, nodding, "it is too broad across the cheek-bones. That is because I am Russian, you know. It is the nose and chin that make it better in three-quarter."

Captain Berkeley gasped slightly, and then broke into an appreciative laugh. "Either you are a mind-reader," said he, "or I was very stupid in staring at you. I expect it was the latter. I am frequently more stupid than you would think any human being could be. I have mental lapses. Still, this time there was some excuse. You must be rather used to having people stare at you, countess—and it

is really very beautiful, either in three-quarters, or profile. One would like to be a painter chap."

"I am very glad that one isn't," said the Russian. "I would rather be looked at than painted. Usually, I am careful not to turn my face full toward any one oftener than is necessary. I look at them a bit sidewise—so—like a parrot. Isn't that better?"

"It is absurd," declared young Berkeley, "and, if you are going to poke fun at me, I sha'n't play. I told you I was stupid. I can't keep up."

"Lord Strophe," observed the countess, "particularly mentioned the fact, in speaking of you the other day, that you were by no means a fool. You don't look a fool, either, Captain Berkeley. Are you quite, quite certain that you are stupid?"

"My word!" cried Berkeley, in horror, "has the earl been talking about me to you? I'm done for, then—if he told the truth."

"Ah, captain," said she, "you come into battle with one arm tied behind you. You're handicapped in advance by your reputation. No, the earl spoke only good of you, but your fame is abroad."

"My fame for what?" he demanded.

"For gallantry, sir," said she, "for gallantry in excess—oh, in excess!"

"Why, madame, dear madame," he cried, "is gallantry then become a sin? Surely not."

"Why, no, captain," said she, laughing, very gently; "*au contraire*, gallantry is a virtue. But, in excess, very much in excess, most virtues become sins. And the Church, captain, bids us avoid communication with sinners, lest we become of like feather. They say, my lord, that, for your sport, you love to play at hearts—and, maybe, break the same."

"They lie, my lady," said Captain Berkeley.

"They say, *mon capitaine*," she went on, "you have a tongue that bewitches, and eyes that plead so well a woman must listen to you, whether she will or no. They say that, as a

woman values her peace of mind, she should cover her ears, and shut her eyes, when you are near."

"They lie, my lady," said Captain Berkeley, again. "They lie most madly—if, indeed, any one ever has said such things."

"And a woman, no less than a man," said the Countess zu Ehrenstern, leaning upon her elbows and looking at her distorted reflection in the brass of the samovar, "a woman, no less than a man, loves her peace of mind, sir. And yet, poor, silly thing, she loves, no less than a man, to set it in the path where danger walks, being by nature curious and venturesome. You have a proverb, you English, which says that a burnt child shuns the fire. But a burnt woman, my lord, puts out a hand to see if the second fire will burn like the first, being by nature curious and venturesome."

She looked up at the man sidewise, with a slow, whimsical smile. "How does the fire feel when it is burning the child—and the woman, captain?" she asked.

"I cannot tell you, madame," answered Captain Berkeley, "but I could tell you, had I the mind, how the child feels."

"Nay, but that I know," said she; and, for a moment, a little shade crossed her face.

A serving-maid, fair, fresh-cheeked and astonishingly coiffed, came out upon the terrace, to take away the tea-things. In everything but that expression which makes individuality, she might have been the sister of Varvara zu Ehrenstern. There was the same slight upward tilt to the eyes, the same breadth of cheek-bone, the same nose and mouth and chin.

The countess smiled as she saw young Berkeley looking from one to the other. "We are much of the same type, Liçzenn and I, are we not?" she asked. "The Slavs and the Bretons bear a strong resemblance to one another, physically—and in other ways, too; the women in particular. I feel quite *chez moi*, here, quite among my own people. Perhaps, it is the like-

ness of temperament more than anything else. We are mystics, both."

"I trust you don't go in for the Breton mysticism," said he. "It seems rather forced and theatrical in this age—all their odd tales of the *ville d'Is* and the rest."

"Ah, but I do go in for them," said she. "Many of the tales, that seem fantastic to you, are history, captain. Of course, many of them are not, but the *ville d'Is* as surely lay out there where the sea lies now, as Paris stands over the Seine. They are a very ancient people, these Bretons, and they were a very great people, once; but they have sat over the ruins of *Is*, whispering of past glories, and dreaming of the things their fathers did, while the modern world marched by and left them in the twilight, alone. Ah, you should get the marquis to tell you tales. They say he is a little mad, but I think not. He is a strange man—I do not pretend to understand him—and his dreams have made him blind and deaf to the world about him, but I do not think he is mad. I think that he holds himself aloof, because no one understands him or the great work he is doing. Ah, but all this is of no interest to you, is it? I must persuade the marquis to convert you."

She leaned back in her chair, clasping her hands over one knee, and Berkeley's eye was caught by the flash of one of the rings she wore.

"That is a very curious ring," said he. "May I look at it? I think I have never before seen a sapphire engraved like a signet."

The countess made as if she would withdraw her hand; then, she held it out for him to take. The ring was set with one very large octagonal sapphire, upon which a coat of arms was engraved, exquisitely.

"But these," cried Captain Berkeley, looking up in sudden astonishment, "these are the royal arms of—of a European kingdom. It is a royal signet ring! How did you come by—Wait! wait a moment; let me think." He stared at her for a little space, brows drawn together as if he were

trying to recall something which had, for an instant, been at the threshold of his mind. Then, he shook his head. The Countess zu Ehrenstern drew a breath a bit longer than common.

"I beg your pardon," said Berkeley. "For a moment, I thought I recalled something about the king whose arms are on that ring, but it has escaped me. Of course, I did not mean to ask how you happened upon it. It is very handsome, is it not?"

"Yes," returned the woman, indifferently; "yes, it is handsome. It was given to—to a member of my family, by the king."

"As a matter of fact," said he, "I suspect it was not so much the ring that caught my eye as the hand it ornaments. You have not a Russian hand, madame. Most Russians have ugly hands."

But the Russian shut her eyes, and held both hands over her ears.

"It is my only safety, sir," said she.

"Why, then, madame," he cried, "rather than imperil you longer, I will go—most unwillingly. Indeed, I have stayed a scandalous time for a first call. You make me forget my manners—among other things."

"Among other things?" she asked, looking down upon him where he stood a step below her. "What things, then?"

"Why," said he, laughing a little, "why, that fire burns, countess, and that I'm but a child who should remember the proverb."

The countess dropped her hands to her sides, and bent her head toward him. "See!" said she. "I shall use no more tricks with you, my captain, but look you full in the eyes, so that you may see the worst of me, and so be in no danger of scorching."

Whether it was some curious effect of the pose in which she stood—a little above him, at the top of the steps—or that the type had, in the hour, grown upon his fancy, he could not have said, but she seemed all at once wonderfully splendid and queenly, and lovely beyond words, so that he threw back his head with a quick jerk,

looking up at her, and she heard the breath hiss between his lips. And he cried out, just above a whisper, "Upon my soul, madame, but you are very beautiful!"

A few moments later, the Countess zu Ehrenstern, with cheeks slightly flushed, mounted to a chamber on one of the upper stories of the château.

Some one in a very grand and ornate bed, some one in a tumbled surge of lace and fine linen, sat up hurriedly, and with some irritability, as if from long and impatient waiting.

"Well," demanded the Marquise de Kersalec, "well, has he gone, Varvara?"

"Yes, he has gone," said the Russian, looking out of a window; "oh, yes, he has gone."

"He stayed a shocking time!" observed the marquise. "And alone, too. I think it was very bad taste. Oh, I know that the earl went away—I asked Liçzenn," she said, defiantly. "What is he like?" she continued. "Heavens! Must I drag everything out of you? And did you start well? Are you going to succeed? Ah, to punish him, once, well; to make him suffer as he has made all those women suffer! Varvara, *mignonne*, you must not fail! You must make him care! We shall do it, easily enough, you and I—I to plan, and you to carry out the plans. The monster!"

The Countess zu Ehrenstern sat down upon the edge of the great bed, and, taking the lace-enveloped figure into her arms, embraced it with some violence. "You vicious little cat!" she laughed. "You are quite as bad as he is; indeed, I dare say, worse. I never heard of such malevolence."

"I want him to suffer, just once, as he has made those women suffer," insisted the cat. "I dare say I am very uncharitable, Varvara *chérie*, but I do so despise that sort of man. It is all very well for the earl—the old dear!—to excuse him, but the man is no less monstrous. What is he

like, Varvara? You've told me nothing of what he is like."

The countess rose and went once more to the window, where she stood looking out. "He seemed," said she, not turning about, "he seemed not a bad sort of man. He seemed—rather fine and—strong, and all that. Perhaps, we have been misjudging him. He looked, rather, as if he himself had suffered."

IV

"WHAT are you going to do this morning?" inquired the old earl at breakfast. "I shall be obliged to stop at home, myself, for that master mason is coming out from Douarnenez, to see about the addition to the stables. You might help me quarrel with him if you like, and if you have any taste in stables. Or, you can take a trap, and drive about. That might be amusing—as a change from looking at the sea. I should be ashamed to look the sea in the face again, if I spent as much time staring at it as you do. Will you have the trap?"

"Why, thanks very much," said Captain Berkeley. "To tell the truth, I was thinking of just—well, running over to Kersalec, for a few moments—to inquire after the marquise, you know," he added, hastily. "She might be worse. I don't think it is civil of us to seem to pay no attention to her illness."

"But you have been at Kersalec," objected the old gentleman, "every day for four days. By now, you ought to be fairly well posted on the marquise's condition."

"She might be worse, you know," repeated young Berkeley, argumentatively. "I don't think you are half civil about her. I have to do all the inquiring, and I send her wholly fictitious messages of condolence from you, each day."

"Ah, well," said the other, "if you feel that I have not done my share, I will go over there this morning in

your place, and let the mason wait."

"Oh, no, no; by no means!" cried Berkeley, with some haste. "Don't let me throw you out. I don't at all mind going."

The earl burst into one of his roars of gusty laughter. "Don't mind going!" he echoed; "I should fancy not! It would be difficult to keep you away. She is a very fine woman, I believe, the Countess zu Ehrenstern," he continued, thoughtfully, after a time. "I have taken a liking to her, an extraordinary liking—for me. She is decidedly handsome, she is young, and she has many more qualities of mind than the average woman, even the woman of her class. I must admit that I should have imagined a man of your age and experience would fancy the ingénue type, rather than the type that Varvara zu Ehrenstern represents. As a man gets on in his thirties, and tires a bit of the *femme du monde*, he is apt to come back to the ingénue, and eventually to marry her. It is her freshness, I expect, that draws him. But I am not altogether sure that this is wise. The countess is certainly no ingénue. She has been married, and she has lived at three different courts, and seen the life there, much of which is not all it should be. I fancy she has had her flirtations, and played her part in the great game, but I think she is the better for it. When one comes to my age, he looks with a tolerant eye upon many things that younger people make a tragic fuss about, because he sees that, in the whole of a lifetime, they are really very unimportant incidents. She is an extremely fine young woman. She interests me."

"I think," said the younger man, "that she must needs interest any one with whom she comes in contact. She is, as you say, very handsome; at times, she is beautiful. But, above all, she has a curious amount of that quality we call—for want of a fit name—magnetism. She is quite unlike most other women. Yes, she interests

me, too. I cannot in the least make her out, but she interests me."

The Countess zu Ehrenstern was in the little garden, which shrank for shelter behind the walls of Kersalec. She held a large atomizer, by means of which she was spraying the hydrangeas with a noxious liquid warranted to destroy insects. She was also smoking a cigarette, a large and plump one made for the comfort of the adult male. This she hurriedly threw behind her, at the sound of a step on the gravel path.

But Captain Berkeley laughed. "Why don't you go on smoking?" said he; "I won't tell any one."

"I didn't want you to know that I—I used them," she confessed. "Englishmen do not approve, do they?"

"Oh, dear lady," he cried, "how many times must I tell you that I have no British prejudices, at all? One of the most charming women I ever knew was Spanish, and she smoked cheroots—huge ones. I should not mind if you smoked a pipe."

"You are really a very great comfort," said the countess, with a relieved sigh. "You and the earl are impossible to disconcert. You take everything as a matter of course. Still, I think I am sorry you saw me smoking that cigarette. It makes the very littlest bit of difference, somehow. A man might be quite willing to see his sister smoke cigarettes, and drink brandy-and-soda, now and then, but——"

"Not the other chap's sister," said Captain Berkeley.

"Precisely," said she; "not the other chap's sister. Did you come over to see me, or to ask after the marquise?"

"I came to ask after the marquise," said he.

"Well, she is very much better, thank you," said the Countess zu Ehrenstern. "She hopes to be about again in a day or so. I shall tell her that you called. Good-bye."

Captain Berkeley sat down on a garden seat, and laughed. "Oh, I don't know," he objected. "Must I go this very moment—and after walk-

ing a whole mile, too? Could you be so heartless?"

"You remind me forcibly," criticized Varvara zu Ehrenstern, "of the convivial gentleman who is always firmly convinced that every one in the room but himself is intoxicated."

"If you are trying to insinuate," said he, "that I am heartless, you'd best give it up, for I am nothing of the sort. I have been having a great deal of trouble with my heart, very lately," he complained; "palpitation and things. I don't know what to do about it."

"Don't you?" she inquired, looking at him out of the corner of her eyes. "Is there nothing you could take for it?"

Captain Berkeley regarded her for some moments. "Yes," said he, at last; "oh, yes."

"Well?" questioned the countess, after another short pause.

But Berkeley shook his head, laughing. "I'm afraid," said he; "down-right afraid. You really deserve it, you know, for your sins, but I am afraid. I have always been afraid of women."

The Countess zu Ehrenstern laughed, rather shortly. "So I have often heard," she assented. "You have a reputation for timidity."

She walked back and forth among the rows of flowers, smiling to herself, but frowning while she smiled, as if something puzzled her. Then, after a little, she faced him over a great, bluish-pink hydrangea.

"Each time I see you," said she, "I am less and less able to make you out, and this annoys me. You do very curious things, sometimes—or leave undone very natural things. You are not in the least like any other man I ever knew."

But he shook his head at her, laughing again. "Of course, I don't pretend to make you out," said he, "or any other woman, either; but I should like to know just why you have seen fit to flatter me so grossly. It is generally admitted that the stupidest woman alive can do much as she pleases with the cleverest man; but that it takes more than a clever man to

understand any woman. You heap your flattery high, dear lady; you must want something."

"No," said she, still facing him over the hydrangea, "no, I don't want anything. I am going to make a confession of sin."

"My word!" cried Captain Berkeley, uneasily. "Is it fit for my young ears, madame? I begin to tremble with apprehension."

But she would not smile; she only faced him, frowning slightly.

"When Lord Strobe told me that you were coming here," said she, "the marquise and I chanced to have been talking about you, and to have been expressing opinions of your career of—gallantry, which were—were far from flattering to you. Then, when we learned that you were to be here, that we were to see you often, the marquise and I—so strongly did we disapprove of the type of man we believed you to represent—determined that we would try to punish you, to make you suffer as you had made those women suffer who had loved you. I was to try to make you fall in love with me, and then—then laugh at you. That is my confession. I make it because I have begun to think that you are not at all the sort of man we were led to believe, and because I—why, I wanted to be, at last, on an—honest footing—do you see what I mean?—because I did not want to go on with the sham."

Berkeley looked up at her, with narrowed, quizzical eyes and a little smile of amusement.

"Yes, oh, yes," said he, "I see what you mean; of course, I see what you mean—the obvious part of it, at least. There are still two or three things that I don't quite understand—at least two or three things. I rather think," he went on, more gravely, "I rather think that it was very jolly of you to own up." He rose from his seat, and came to her side of the hydrangea, holding out his hand. "It was very jolly of you to do it," he repeated, "and to want to."

He stood for a moment, holding her hand, and smiling down upon the sap-

phire ring that bore a king's arms; and the countess looked away, over the beds and borders of flowers, breathing, so it seemed, a bit quickly.

"I wonder," said he, aloud, but as if he were speaking to himself, "I wonder just why you wanted to own up; I wonder."

"I told you," said the countess, still looking away over the flowers, "some of the reasons why. If there chance to be other reasons—I will not tell them to you."

"I wonder," he repeated, and he laughed again. "What a curious sort of person you two seem to have thought me," he went on, "you and the marquise—a sort of male vampire, a Blue-beard who never got to the altar! I expect the marquise thinks me so still. But you, countess—" he paused a moment, smiling, and touched the king's ring with a thoughtful finger—"you've been converted. Will you tell me the truth about something? Will you tell me——?"

The Countess zu Ehrenstern drew back her hand, and turned away. "The marquis is coming out on the terrace," she said.

A man had come out through one of the long windows that opened upon the terrace, and was standing by the balustrade, looking down toward the garden. When he saw the two there among the flowers, he waved a hand to them, and came down the steps and the winding gravel path.

He was a man of middle height, very slightly made, and he walked with a slight stoop of the shoulders, as men of the scholarly habit are apt to walk. He had the scholar's pallor, also, as if he spent little time in the open air. His face was thin and drawn, and the black hair of his mustache, and of the tuft of chin beard which he wore, was very sparse. He had features of great delicacy, almost womanish, and his eyes were preternaturally large and of a quite indescribable, brooding cloudiness, the eyes which Berkeley had already seen in so many of the Breton men, eyes that dreamed of things very far away.

"This is Captain Berkeley, of course," he said, in French, holding out his hand. "I owe you a thousand apologies, Captain Berkeley, for not having welcomed you sooner to Château Kersalec. It is an unpardonable rudeness toward you and toward monsieur the earl, but I am so deeply engrossed in a work of importance that it is only now and then I come to the surface, as it were, and see the world about me. It is very unfortunate that neither the marquise nor I should have been able to greet you. However, the marquise, I hear, is very nearly herself again. I am sure the countess will explain to you how absorbed I am in my work." His great eyes turned with confidence upon the Countess zu Ehrenstern.

"I have been telling Captain Berkeley," said she, "that we must persuade you to take him in hand on the subject of the Breton history and legend. He is insultingly skeptical. He doubts even the existence of the *ville d'Is*."

The Breton's eyes rested upon the other man with mild wonder. "Doubts the existence of Is?" he repeated, as if speaking to himself. Then, he shook his head, and sighed. "There are many, alas! who doubt it, sir," he said, gently, "though fewer now than formerly. It must be my part to convince them, as I alone can do." He looked at the younger man for a moment, with narrowed eyes, as if he were attempting to read him, to judge his worth.

"If it would interest you, Captain Berkeley," said he, at last, "I should be glad to show you some documents, certain plans and maps, and to tell you something of the city that lay—that lies out yonder under the sea. If you would care to come, on any day, to my study, it would give me much pleasure."

"Why, you are kind, sir!" cried young Berkeley. "It would interest me greatly, though, I confess, I should be a most stupid listener, knowing nothing, as I do, of the Breton legends. If I may, I shall come very soon."

"Whenever you wish," said the Marquis de Kersalec.

They had moved, as they talked, a little way along the path that crossed the garden, and had come to a place where the high protecting wall was cut down to the level of a man's breast. Over its top, one saw the unresting waves of the Baie des Trépassés, and the long Pointe du Raz beyond, its signal station white under the noon sun.

The Marquis de Kersalec leaned upon the wall's coping, and turned his face to the flashing sea. "There was the centre of the greatest city in the north, Captain Berkeley," said he, in a low voice. "The palaces and the cathedral once stood where the Baie des Trépassés lies now." A look of sadness and of unspeakable longing, too real to seem foolish or bizarre, overspread his face, and hollowed his eyes. "If only Is might wake from her sleep!" he murmured.

"And her mass be finished," supplemented Varvara zu Ehrenstern.

"Who knows?" said the Breton, sighing; and he turned again to the sunlit sea.

"I must be going on," said Berkeley. "It grows late, and I must not keep the earl waiting for his *déjeuner*. He grows dangerous if withheld too long from food. I shall take an early advantage of your offer, sir, to learn something of Breton history. You are most kind."

He made his adieus to the Countess zu Ehrenstern, and left the two standing there, by the cliff wall, together. He walked homeward over the moor, slowly, for it was not as late as he had said. He had left because of the turn the conversation had taken. He had felt curiously alien and strange. He knew nothing of these matters, of the very problematical Is and all such ancient things. He wondered what the marquis had meant by speaking of the city as sleeping, and what the countess had meant by her words about the mass. He was conscious of a feeling of annoyance at his ignorance, and, after the manner of the

ignorant, at the serious and grave fashion in which these people treated things which he looked upon as flimsy fable.

And, from this, he fell to thinking, as he climbed the long hill toward the Chapel of St. They, of the countess's confession, before the marquis appeared. It had surprised him much more than he had been willing to show. He had never thought of himself as successful with women, or as especially popular; that the Marquise de Kersalec and Varvara zu Ehrenstern should have considered him a sort of Don Juan, seemed to him absurd.

Also, he thought, laughing lightly, of the countess's question, when he had complained of his heart trouble: "Is there nothing you could take for it?"

"No one ever had a more direct dare than that," he said to himself. "I wonder—I wonder why I did not take it. Somehow, I seemed not quite to want to. There must be something the matter with me. I actually did not want to!"

V

WHILE Captain Berkeley was making his way across the moor to Château Kerval, the Marquis de Kersalec stood by the sea wall, talking to Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and it seemed that he had found, at last, an intelligent and a sympathetic listener; for, as he talked, his pallid face flushed a little, and his eyes brightened, and the mask of slight indifference, which he habitually wore in public, was quite laid aside. But, at the end of perhaps half an hour, he looked over the countess's shoulder toward the foot of the garden, and frowned a bit.

"The Earl of Strobe is driving up," he said. "If you will pardon me, I shall go inside. I do not like Lord Strobe." And he beat a rather hasty retreat into the château.

He started, by force of habit, toward the suite of rooms where were his library and his study, and where

he often shut himself up for days at a time, sleeping in a small adjoining room, or even upon a couch in the study. But, at the door, he changed his mind, and rang for a servant.

"Go up to madame's apartments," he said to the man, "and have madame's maid ask if I may be received for a few moments." For the marquis, in his household, clung to many of the courtly and old-fashioned customs, and he would no more have thought of penetrating to his wife's apartments without first sending a servant to ask permission, than he would have thought of invading the rooms of a guest.

The man returned, bringing word that madame would be pleased to receive monsieur, and the marquis went up, at once, to her suite.

The marquise lay in a reclining chair by a little table, and she had been reading an English novel, which lay open, face downward, upon her lap. She lifted her hand to her husband, and he bent over it, very gallantly, and kissed it.

"I wished to make sure, personally," said he, "that you were coming on as well as they told me. It has been quite three or four days, I think, since I have seen you."

"It has been six," said the marquise, in an unencouraging tone.

"Ah?" said her husband, absently; and he chafed his hands together, standing beside the little reading-table. "You look very well, indeed," he offered, after a pause, "very well, indeed. And beautiful as ever," he continued, with a little bow.

The marquise was so rude as to make a slight face, which her husband did not see.

"Captain Berkeley has been here this morning," he went on, "to inquire after your health. It was most polite of him."

The marquise betrayed a slight increase of interest. "I should not have imagined," said she, "that he was the sort of man that would appeal to you. I understand that much of his career has been—not dishonorable, perhaps, but far from admirable."

"Ah?" said the marquis, "as to that, I, of course, know nothing. But he seemed to me a young man of very great intelligence. I am not so foolish as to suppose that, because a man's interests are quite apart from what is all in all to me, he is lacking in intelligence. I took rather a fancy to this Captain Berkeley. We must have him here to dinner, soon."

"As you like," she agreed, wearily. "It will, at least, be an event."

The marquis took a turn about the room, clasp and unclasp his hands behind him. "You—you have not many events in your life here, Aurélie, have you?" he asked, a little awkwardly. "I suppose it becomes at times almost—almost tiresome." He spoke as if in question, looking at her across the room with an expression of deprecation, of half-apology.

"'Almost'?" cried the marquise, with a flash of nervous anger; "'almost'? It is a grave, I tell you, a living grave! It is enough to drive one mad. What have I to fill my life, in this *triste* country of granite and bruyère? Whom do I ever see? What do I ever do but sleep and take my meals, and try to make the days pass? I tell you, it is a living grave!"

The marquis sat down in a chair across the table from his wife, and his hands stroked the polished arm-rests. He did not speak at once—he was searching for words that might make some impression upon her, might make her see how impossible it was for him to alter their mode of life. He was not a dull man, and he saw at once that his wife's complaint was no meaningless outburst of anger, but that she had been suffering in silence, probably for a long time, and that the words had been wrung from her in a moment of nervous weakness.

"I am sorry," he said, at last; "I am more sorry than I can tell you, Aurélie. It must be very dreary for you. I wish it might be otherwise, but I do not see how it can be—for the present, at least. I must do my work, alas—I wish it made so much of an appeal to you that you could do it with me—and

I cannot be disturbed by constantly entertaining visitors. What is there I could do to make your life pleasanter, my dear?"

"You could let me go to Paris, now and then," she answered. "You could let me travel—make visits—do as other women do."

"A wife's place," said the Marquis de Kersalec, with dignity, "is beside her husband. I do not approve of these modern *ménages*, in which husband and wife have each their circles of friends, and meet now and then, practically as strangers. If a wife cannot share her husband's interests, she should at least remain at the head of his house."

The marquise turned wearily in her long chair. "That is what I expected you to say," said she, "and that ends the argument, does it not? I am your wife, and I remain at the head of your house, as you desire. I shall remain there till I am dead, I suppose, while you are buried among your books and your—dreams."

The marquis made a little exclamation of anger, but his wife turned quickly toward him, stretching out a hand.

"Ah, no; ah, no! I did not mean that, Jean!" she cried. "Forgive me, I did not mean to be rude, but I am almost at the end of endurance. If you had not let me ask Varvara zu Ehrenstern here, I do not know what I should have done. I really cannot bear it long. It is too dreadful! You should never have married me, and brought me here. I was not made to be alone. Oh, I know, I know," she hurried on, as he would have spoken, "I was a Kersalec, and so were you, and we were the last of the line, and they wished us to marry, but—sometimes, Jean, I think that people have no right to marry, unless they love each other—that it is a sin, something monstrous. In some countries, in England and in America, they tell me, young people are not given in marriage, but arrange their own marriages, just because they love each other. Somehow, I think that

is the only right way. We did not love each other, you and I. We liked each other, that was all, and there seemed very important reasons why we should marry—I wonder if they were important enough. I have not been much to you, have I? I have not been more than a head to your house, an obedient wife. I have not been a helpmeet, really. I wish I could take more interest in your work. Somehow, it all seems to me so remote, so alien, so—forgive me, Jean—so useless. It is because I have not the temperament, I suppose. I am very, very sorry. You should have married some one who understood you, who felt as you do."

The marquis rose from his chair, with a quick sigh, and walked across to one of the windows. It chanced that this window looked out upon the garden, which lay within the sheltering walls of the castle. Varvara zu Ehrenstern and the old Earl of Strobe were standing below, and, at the moment when the marquis reached the window, the countess looked up, and their eyes met. Then, a curious thing happened, for, with his wife's last words still in his ears, a great burning flush swept over the marquis's face, and his heart began, all at once, to beat most strangely.

When, at last, he turned back into the room, his eyes held a look which his wife had never before seen there. It was almost a look of terror. She feared that she had hurt him, had spoken too strongly, perhaps.

"Don't mind me, Jean," she said, with a little attempt at laughter. "Perhaps, I said too much. Perhaps, I am a little nervous and overwrought. But, oh, if you can, let me out of this prison, now and then. I shall be the better for it, and you, too. Do not try me too far, dear; I cannot bear this for a lifetime. I warn you, do not try me too far. I may grow desperate. You do not realize how terribly alone I am."

But the Marquis de Kersalec made an abrupt gesture, and left the room without speaking; and she sat up in

her long chair, amazed, and watched him go. Never before had she seen him do a rude thing, or lose control of himself.

"I must have made him very angry," she said to herself, "or he would never have gone away like that. Oh, yes, I must have made him very angry—I wonder why? At any rate, I spoke only the truth. I cannot bear this living death much longer. If Varvara had not come, I think I should have gone mad. Poor Jean! I am sorry to have made him angry. Ah, if only something would happen to take me out of this tomb, into the world where men and women live! If only something would happen!"

VI

THE earl left his trap with the groom at the gate, and came up into the garden, through the little postern door in the north wall.

"How do you do, madame?" he said to the Countess zu Ehrenstern. "I am looking for a young man called Berkeley, who is by way of being a friend and guest of mine. I have been driving over to the Pointe du Raz, and I stopped in here to give him a lift homeward, in case he has not already gone."

"He went quite half an hour ago," said she. "And I should rather like to know why people feel called upon to apologize and to invent excuses for stopping in to pass the time of day with me. With Captain Berkeley, it was the illness of the marquise that must be asked after; with you, sir, it is the comfort of Captain Berkeley. I consider you both uncomplimentary in the extreme."

But the old gentleman laughed. "Why, now, madame," said he, "you drive me to the wall—of truth. I came here expressly to pass the time of day, as you put it, with you. I fabricated the Berkeley excuse as I came up the gravel path. I am, by the way, thinking of sending Robert Berkeley home. He interferes with

my pleasures. I see very little of you in these days, and I lay it all to his interfering selfishness."

"Why don't you set in to cut him out?" suggested the Countess zu Ehrenstern.

"Alas, he has cut me out!" complained the old gentleman.

"That shows," said she, "a craven spirit, a lack of pertinacity on your part, sir, which disappoints me sorely."

The earl laughed again. "You are a very accomplished young woman, madame," said he. "I have taken a great liking to you. I was saying so, only this morning, to my rival, Captain Berkeley. Was that the marquis who retreated so very hastily as I approached? I could not avoid seeing his flight."

"Yes," said the countess. "He has gone back to his work, I believe. He came out into the garden to greet Captain Berkeley, and stopped a half-hour after the captain left. We were talking of the work he has in hand."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, "of what lies out—there!" And he waved an arm toward the Baie des Trépassés.

"And of those who built it," said she, "and of those who sank it under the sea."

The earl leaned his elbows upon the low wall, and stared out over the flashing waves, his shaggy white brows drawn into a thoughtful frown. "I wonder," he said, "I wonder if he is mad—as they say."

"Oh, no," said the Russian, very positively; "no, he is not mad. It may be that he is deluded in some of the things he believes, some of the things he—hopes for. It may be he has so long sat apart from the world that dreams have come to have substance and place with him, but—oh, no, he is not mad. He is very sane indeed, and he has a most unusual mind."

"What do you mean?" demanded the Earl of Strope. "What do you mean by 'some of the things he hopes

for? What things does he hope for, madame? Does he expect to sit on the throne of his so-called ancestors? Does he expect to rise from the sea?"

The countess looked at him, oddly, for an instant. "Did I say that?" she asked. "Did I say he hoped for anything? That must have been a slip of the tongue. But he is not mad. You English," she went on, smiling, "you English have no imagination. You have no instinctive belief in the truth of things; you are always demanding proofs. It is a great pity."

"Still, proofs, madame," said the old earl, stubbornly, "proofs are, after all, good, comfortable, tangible things, and dreams are bitter in the waking. His wife is little in sympathy with him, I should think."

"Very little," agreed the Countess zu Ehrenstern, "and that, too, is a great pity. She is lonely here. She was not born for this sort of life, nor for this sort of man."

"He should never have married her," said the old gentleman, "to bring her here to such a life. He should have married some one who was in sympathy with his work, some one of like temperament—who might have helped him."

"Yes," said she, slowly, "yes, he should have done that." And she turned her head to look up at the gray walls above her. It was just at the moment when the marquis had come to the window, and their eyes met.

The countess turned away, and leaned over the low sea-wall, with her face to the wind. "Yes," she said again, very softly, "he should have done that." And she was silent for a long time.

"Ah, well," said the old gentleman, starting from his reverie, "there are very sad mistakes all around us; we see them every day. And the saddest of all are, I think, the matrimonial ones. Sometimes, they last out a lifetime, and are buried; and, sometimes, they right themselves in

strange ways. The books say, this is a humdrum world; but that is a lie. I am an old man, countess, and I have seen some very odd things—but the oddest were, after all, the most natural. Ah, yes, the books lie. I have lived a long time, and I know it."

VII

CAPTAIN BERKELEY reconnoitred cautiously through the grill in the garden gate.

"Ah," said he, "she is at it again, persecuting the poor little insects that never did her any harm—as if they might not appreciate a superior thing in hydrangeas, as well as other people! I believe she has no heart." And he went through the gate.

She had on a frock of very pale yellow, with white lace at unexpected intervals, and she was roofed, as it were, by a most preposterously huge and ornate hat, made of straw and the same white lace, with great strings at the back, which quite concealed her head.

"Good morning!" said Captain Berkeley to the back of the yellow-and-white frock. "May I offer you a cigarette?"

She turned about, dropping the rubber atomizer, with which she had been persecuting the innocent insects, and Captain Berkeley fell back a step—and another step, stumbling; and something caught at his throat to check his breathing, till he thought he should never breathe again; and something else caught at his heart to check its beating, till he thought it would never beat again; and so he stood for a long time, staring, quite helpless to move or speak.

He knew, in the first flash, that she must be the marquise, but he had pictured the marquise as middle-aged, like her husband. He had pictured her—as one will picture a person whom one has never seen, whimsically and without reason, a fretful invalid magnifying a trifling indisposition into something for which she must take to her bed. He could not remember that

the earl had said very much about her. He had talked chiefly of the marquis and of Madame zu Ehrenstern. He had rather dreaded the marquise's return to health, since she must, perforce, rob him of many of his tête-à-têtes with the countess. That was what he had thought her: middle-aged, a fretful invalid. Middle-aged! This was a girl, young and fresh, and exquisite beyond belief. She had great, gray eyes, and, at the moment, they were very wide and fixed—frightened, one might say. And she had dark, almost black hair, that was turned away from her forehead in a great, soft wave, and broke into little rebellious curls before her ears. And all the contour of her face was so lovely that it may not be told, so dainty and so perfect that there are no words for it. It was not a Latin face, nor Breton, either, he thought; but a type between these two, a type he had never before seen, save in dreams and imaginings.

One would have called her tall, for she was slender, and she stood and moved like a queen; but, measuring her by his own height, he saw that she was rather under medium stature.

"Oh, madame!" said he, unsteadily, when breath and voice had come to him, at last; "oh, madame, will you forgive me? For I did not know; I thought that you were the Countess zu Ehrenstern—I did not know. And will you permit me to introduce myself? I am Captain Robert Berkeley, and I am stopping at Château Kerval, with the Earl of Strobe."

She caught her hand to her breast, suddenly, and gave a stifled cry, but her eyes never left his face. "Captain—Berkeley!" she cried, so softly that he scarcely heard her voice. "You, Captain Berkeley? You? Ah, no, it is impossible! They tol' me— You cannot be Captain Berkeley."

"Alas, madame," said he, with an apologetic laugh, "I am Robert Berkeley, and I once held a captain's commission in her Majesty's army."

"Bot I 'ad thought—" she began; and halted. "I 'ad believe—" she continued; and went no further.

"You are ver' differen' from w'at I 'ave expect', monsieur," she said, at last. "I—I was a little—surprise'!"

Captain Berkeley made a gesture of despair. A very little smile began at the corners of the lady's mouth, and struggled there against her efforts. Then, after a moment, she held out her hand.

"I am ver' glad," said she, "at las' to wel-come you to Château Kersalec. Your inquiries for my 'ealth were brought me, each day, by Var—by the Countess zu Ehrenstern. You were ver' kin'."

Captain Berkeley took the hand in his, and bent over it. "I hope I shall have no occasion for further kindness of that sort, madame," said he.

"It 'as been so great an effort, monsieur?" she asked.

"That was not quite my thought, madame," said Captain Berkeley. And the very little smile struggled again at the corners of the lady's mouth.

Then, all at once, as if she had suddenly bethought herself of what her attitude toward this man should be, she turned quite sober, and a little stiff and formal.

But, "Oh, my lady, my lady!" cried Captain Berkeley to his soul; "you were never made for stiffness and formality, but for all kindness and tenderness and joy—not for frowns, my lady, but for smiles and laughter. What was heaven thinking of to set you in this barren land?"

"I will sen' a maid," said she, making a little motion to gather her skirts together, "I will sen' a maid to fin' Varvara—to fin' the Countess zu Ehrenstern, that she may not lose your call upon 'er."

"Oh, madame," protested Captain Berkeley, "why drag an unwilling countess into my presence? Have mercy upon her. She may be asleep, or very busy about something of importance. She may be," he suggested, eagerly, "engaged in good works—giving alms to the poor, or—or something like that."

And, for the third time, the Mar-

quise de Kersalec had trouble with the corners of her small mouth. "You are mos' thoughtful, monsieur," said she, and she sat down, with an appearance of some unwillingness, upon one of the garden seats; "an' mos' charitable, too, to theenk at once that the Countess zu Ehrenstern might be so well employ'. 'As your life been full of good works, Captain Berkeley, that you are so ready to look for them in othaires?"

"You are very cruel, madame," said he, sighing. "Have I deserved it?"

"If all they 'ave say of you is true, monsieur," said she, "you deserve ver' great cruelty, more than will probably evvaire come your way."

"More than has, of late, been visited upon me, marquise?" asked Captain Berkeley, and he laughed a little.

She raised swift, startled eyes to his. "I do not understan' you, monsieur," she murmured, but her cheeks went pink.

"The countess has not told her that she gave the thing away," commented Captain Berkeley to himself. Then, aloud, he said: "Do not believe what they say of any man, madame—nor the half thereof. No man is so bad as the gossips make him; for, even though all they say of him be true—by a marvel—yet in every man there is something good, and that the gossips will never tell you."

The marquise made a deprecating gesture, as if she would dismiss a topic which became tiresome. "You are ver' probably right, monsieur," said she. "I shall not dispute with you. Indeed, the subject is one I should not 'ave brought up. It was not fair, nor polite. I beg your forgiveness, monsieur. Tell me 'ow you like our Pointe du Van."

"It is very fine, marquise," said he. "One may find few coasts which are wilder and more tempestuous, or grander in time of storm. It is very fine, but bleak and barren. Does not one grow lonely here, madame?"

"Yes," said the Marquise de Kersalec, and she looked away over the

stony moor; "yes, one grows lonely, 'ere—so lonely! It is a bleak, *triste* country, monsieur. There is nothing bot win' an' sea, nothing bot rocks an' gorse an' bruyère—nothing bot dreams and legends." It was as if she spoke to herself, and she could not have known how bitter her voice became.

"Dreams and legends!" echoed Captain Berkeley, thoughtfully. "The land is wrapped in dreams and legends, is it not?—strange dreams and strange legends. They are, for the most part, new to me. It is hard to take them seriously. The marquis, they tell me, is engaged in a great work upon the early legends—or history."

"Yes," said she, and her voice was still low and bitter and very lonely; "yes, 'e 'as given 'is life to it."

"He offered, yesterday," said young Berkeley, "to show me something of the work he is doing, to tell me something of this strange history which people call legend. I shall be glad to take advantage of his offer. They tell me," he went on, in a deprecatory tone, as one speaks of something rather absurd and preposterous, and apologizes for speaking of it, "they tell me that he is—that the marquis is—descended from the last king of Is." He half expected the marquise to laugh.

"Oh, yes," said she, quite readily, "yes; we are both descend' from the king of Is. We are cousins, my 'usban' an' I, the las' of our line."

Berkeley, standing with his arms upon the wall's coping, looked out across the Baie des Trépassés, where the gulls wheeled and cried.

"Keeping watch over your lost kingdom," said he, half in jest. "It is a lonely watch; and, only a few hours away, there is Paris, with men and women and lights and music, with balls and plays and opera, and all the gay, happy things that people do to make life brighter."

"Monsieur, monsieur!" cried the Marquise de Kersalec, sharply; and, when he turned to her, her eyes were wet and her lips trembling.

"Oh, madame!" said he, in a voice

that she would not have believed he could command—lower and deeper and more tender than any voice she had ever heard; “oh, madame, can you forgive me? I shall not forgive myself. I have hurt you, and I would not do that for anything in God’s world. You were lonely, madame, and I have made you lonelier, with my thoughtless chatter. I beg you to forgive me!”

“Ah, monsieur,” said the marquise, “it is nothing—bot nothing!” and she tried to laugh. “For a moment, one little moment, w’en you ’ave speak of—of all those things that a woman love’, an’ that I may not ’ave, I—I was sad. See, monsieur, it is gone, an’ I laugh. I am ver’ ’appy ’ere at Kersalec, ver’ contented an’ busy. We Bretons do not care for crowds an’ gaiety; we are quieter. We love the sea an’ the open moors, monsieur. We are a ver’ simple folk, an’ you mus’ not fill our ’eads with thoughts of Paris an’ of balls an’—all such. Per’aps, in a few years, w’en my ’usban’s work is finish’, we may go about more, an’ you will see us at the opera an’ at those plays an’ balls you speak of. They mus’ be—ver’ nice, monsieur. Monsieur, w’y do you look so fierce an’ savage?”

“I was indulging in profanity, madame,” said Captain Berkeley, “for the good of my soul.”

“I ’ave never ’ear’,” said she, in a slightly shocked tone, “that profanity was good for the soul.”

“It sometimes relieves it, madame,” said the captain.

“It may imperil it,” she submitted, virtuously.

“Yet many people,” he insisted, “have been known to imperil their souls, for relief from what was intolerable.”

He spoke lightly, and with no thought for his words; but the Marquise de Kersalec gave him a sudden, swift look from widened eyes, and then remained silent, staring out over the gay flowers of the garden; and, after a long time, she sighed, very wearily, and rose to her feet.

“One mus’ be ver’ desperate to do that, mus’ one not?” she asked; “ver’ desperate an’ ver’ weecked. One’s soul is a precious thing, monsieur. W’at would bicomme of one, if one’s soul were los’? Ah, ’ere come’ the countess, at las’. Does your ’eart beat quick, monsieur? Now, we shall ’ave some *thé à la russe*.”

VIII

It was two days after this that the Marquis and Marquise de Kersalec and Varvara zu Ehrenstern came over to Château Kerval for luncheon. The affair passed pleasantly enough, for the earl was in excellent humor, and even the marquis revealed a wholly unlooked for fund of anecdote. Only the marquise seemed a bit *distracte* and pre-occupied. She looked paler than her wont, also, and tired about the eyes.

They spent a half-hour after luncheon in going over the castle, which had some peculiarities of construction, notably a series of underground chambers, hollowed, for the most part, out of the living rock. Then, as the day was warm and fine, neither windy nor too bright, they strolled out through the courtyard and along the cliff’s edge, at the north of the Pointe du Van, where lies the great Baie de Douarnenez.

As they walked, it chanced that Robert Berkeley and the marquise fell a little apart from, and ahead of, the others, and, looking back presently, saw them some distance behind, preparing to sit down among the great boulders of granite which line the high cliff.

“Those two,” said Varvara zu Ehrenstern, “are quite too energetic for a deliberate person like myself. I frankly admit that I am lazy. Perhaps, that is because I am a Russian. I like strolling with frequent stops, but I absolutely refuse to walk. If either of you two, or both of you, are athirst for exercise, you may desert me. I am going to sit down and rest.”

"Why should we not all three sit down?" inquired the earl. "This is a fine spot, I think. One sees a great distance. Will you be comfortable on that rock, countess?"

"Not so comfortable as I mean to be," said she. "I am going to sit on the little patch of heather, with my back to the boulder—so! Now," she laughed, "if only I had that other rock for my arm, I should be quite happy;" and she pointed to a boulder of granite, worn round by age and weather, which lay at a little distance, half buried in the ground.

"Would you really like it?" asked the old gentleman, simply.

"Indeed, yes," said she, laughing again, for she had no thought that the stone could be lifted by any three men together.

But the earl went and stood over it, with his strong legs planted well apart; and he settled his hands under the worn edges of the rock, and bent his shoulders to the strain, and it seemed as if he lifted a block of wood or a footstool, only that, at the first moment, they heard the muscles of his arms and shoulders crackle gently, and they saw his face redden a bit, and the veins stand out upon his forehead. He brought the rock over to where the countess sat, and laid it so that she might rest her arm upon it. Then he sat down upon the turf, near by.

Both the countess and the Marquis de Kersalec felt vaguely, though without in the least realizing the true magnitude of the thing, that they had seen a tremendous feat of bodily strength performed, through a mere whim and for a trifling end, and they looked at this strange, grim old giant with a silent wonder that was almost awe.

"I did not suppose any man living could do that," said the countess, after a moment, and there was a thrill of genuine admiration in her voice. "I was only joking when I spoke. I should not have believed it humanly possible." She gave a little, nervous laugh. "You are almost too

strong to be canny, Lord Strope," she said. "One is almost afraid of you. Tell me, did you ever use your strength against a man, when you were very angry?"

"Yes," said the earl, "but only once—that is, only once when I was angry. It was out in China, and the man had tried to strangle me from behind, at night. I believe I broke him," he added, reflectively, as if he were speaking of some fragile toy.

The countess laughed again. "It must certainly have been at night," said she; "no man would be so mad as to attempt to strangle you—if he had once had a look at you."

"No," said the earl, quite seriously, "no, that would be very unwise." He gazed out over the sea, frowning, and, for an instant, his iron face took on a look of old age.

"I dread coming to the time when I must lose my strength," he said. "I dread it more than I can say. I have always enjoyed my strength, have taken a sort of childish pleasure in being much stronger than other men." He laughed, half apologetically. "I own that I am vain of it," he said, "and particularly so, since it has remained with me past the limit of most men's lives. Yes, I dread its going." He turned toward the Marquis de Kersalec, with a quick jerk of his great shoulders, as if he would shake off the thought that haunted him.

"How does young Robert Berkeley impress you?" he asked. "I think a great deal of him. He and my grandson-in-law, Isabeau de Monsigny's husband, are the only young men I have been genuinely fond of, in many years."

"I liked him at once," said the marquis. "We have, I should think, almost no tastes or interests in common, but I like him. He has a singular amount of personal magnetism. There are some men so gifted—and some women. I should imagine that Captain Berkeley was very attractive to women, though he is not at all the type one calls a lady's man."

"Yes," agreed the earl, laughing, "he has always been attractive to women—unfortunately so. He has something of a reputation for it, but he has much besides that to recommend him. He is called one of the most promising of the younger diplomatists in the British service. He will rise high, I believe, if he cares to. He had a fine record in the military service, also. He won his captaincy and a D. S. O. for conspicuous gallantry in action. He saved the life of a brother officer at a most extraordinary risk of his own."

"He is a very unusual young man," said the marquis, nodding emphatically, "a young man worth knowing. I should like to see more of him. He is coming to my study, some day, to look into Breton history a little. It is a new subject to him."

"It is a new subject to most of us," said the old Earl of Strobe, thoughtfully. "Very few people outside of Brittany know anything about the early Bretons—save, of course, those scholars who are studying the Celtic peoples. It is a new subject to most of us, and a very fascinating subject. When I first came here, years ago, I was inclined to scoff at the local legends, and to be impatient of what I called the Breton superstition, but I have grown more tolerant. Perhaps, it is because one grows quicker of belief as one gets on in years. Perhaps, it is—as I said the other day to Robert Berkeley—that here in Brittany one breathes in the spirit of the country with the air. I am not prepared to say that I place confidence in all the popular legends—no one does that, I fancy—but I scoff no longer. There is much more truth abroad than the young and sure are inclined to credit."

"Very much more," said the Marquis de Kersalec, rather sadly. "But the young and sure, the mockers and the indifferent, make up the world, *ici bas*. It leaves one very much alone."

"No," cried Varvara zu Ehrenstern, in a low, strong voice; "no, not alone! The mockers and the indifferent may

make up much of the world, but there are those who believe and sympathize, as well, who would help if they might. There are always such."

The marquis's face flushed suddenly, and a light burned in his eyes. "Thank God for them!" said he. And the Earl of Strobe looked from one to the other of the two earnest faces, wondering what it all meant.

But the other two, Robert Berkeley and the marquise, when they looked back and saw the three preparing to sit down, halted a moment to watch.

"Per'aps," said the marquise, "we ought to go back. I did not realize that we were so far a'head of them."

"As you like, madame," said he. "It is finer here and before us, but, if you prefer, we will join the others."

"No," said the marquise, at last, "per'aps they will be coming on, directly. If they do not, we can go back after a while. Firs', we mus' see the birds, the *mouettes* an' the *goëlands*. See, monsieur, there are thousan's, millions of them!"

They stood at that part of the cliff where there is an indentation of the shore called the Bay of Gulls—*la Baie des Mouettes*—and the rocks below were white with the birds, and the air was noisy with their cries. It is a sort of double bay, with a wall of rock thrust out through its middle, and on one side the *mouettes* live, and on the other the *goëlands*, which have a ring of black about their necks.

There was a little haze abroad, which dimmed the sun, and lay far off upon the sea, in a belt of silver; so that one might not say where sea ended, and sky began. It was warm, and there was no wind on this side of the point, only a long, smooth swell that slapped and sucked at the rocks far below the cliff's edge.

The two walked farther on, past the Bay of Gulls, where there was no clamor, only the slap of water against the rocks below. And the marquise sat down on the edge of a boulder, turning her face to the quiet sea, and to the breath of cool air that rose from it.

"'Ere it is nice," said she, with a sigh, "cool an' fresh an' beautiful. Can you see the othaires, *m'sieu le capitaine*? Are they coming, no?"

"Not yet," said young Berkeley. "They are all three sitting in a circle on the heather, and I should say that the marquis was telling a story. It looks that way."

"It is ver' strange," said she, shaking her small head, "'ow 'e 'as been, the las' few days—the marquis. Me, I do not understan'. 'E does not shut 'imself up any more, an' 'e looks—looks interest' in theengs. I 'ave not seen 'im so in a ver' long time. It is odd, yes—bot, of course, ver' nice," she added, hastily.

"Of course," agreed young Berkeley, nodding, "of course. Where is the bell?" he asked, presently. "There is a bell down below, somewhere. I have been hearing it ever since we came here."

"A bell?" said the marquise. "There should be no bell near 'ere." And she held up her head to listen.

"Perhaps," said Captain Berkeley, "it is only an odd sound the water makes against the rocks below—a little cavern, or something; but it is very like a muffled bell. There! listen!"

But the marquise, who had come to his side at the edge of the cliff, crossed herself, and turned pale; and she said something very rapidly, in Breton, that might have been a prayer.

"It is a bell, monsieur," she said, presently, "a drown' bell, a bell under the sea, that mus' go ringing, ringing, al-ways. Sometimes, one 'ear' them w'en the sea is calm. Per'aps, it is one of the bells of Is, w'at may nevvair be still. Me, I 'ave 'ear' them over in the Baie des Trépassés. Theenk, monsieur, nevvair, nevvair to res', like the good bells on lan', bot to swing with the tides, ringing, like the souls of the poor drown' men, the *marins* 'oo mus' wander in purgatory biccuse they 'ave not 'ad the good death—*la bonne mort*—because they 'ave die'—'ow do you say?—unshriven."

And then, sitting on the edge of the great boulder, with her beautiful face very sober and serious and full of simple faith, she told him the strange Breton tale of the flight of the bells to Rome on the night of Holy Thursday each year, and of their blessing there by the Pope, and of their return homeward, ready for the peals of Holy Saturday morning.

"Bot the *cloches noyées*, monsieur," said she, "the drown' bells may not go biccuse they 'ave not 'ad the good death. It is ver', ver' sad."

And, because he asked to know more, she told him about the *chasse St-Hubert*, when the birds return in the Springtime, and about the pious folk of St. Malo, who taught their children to pray:

*"A furore Anglorum
Libera nos, Domine!"*

and of how they were miraculously saved by the prayer, from the ships of the Black Prince. And she told him the story of Perronik l'Idiot, who is the Breton Percival, and of his adventures with the sorcerer and the giant and the flower that laughs, and the yellow lady.

And Berkeley listened, not speaking, save to ask her to go on, only watching her face and the changes of expression that went over it, from anger to tenderness, and from pity to pride. She spoke, not in her halting English, but in French, with a word of Breton, now and then, when there was need, and her voice was low and sweet and gentle, the voice that certain of those women have who are great singers.

When she would tell him no more, but only laughed and shook her head, and protested that she was tired, young Berkeley rose to his feet, with a long sigh.

"You have taken me out of myself and out of my world, madame," said he, "into a world I knew nothing of—a garden of strange flowers. I return with some stiffness. This is the same sea, and the muffled bell is still ringing, and here are the same moors, but I

have altered somewhat. I seem not to fit into my old place." He shook his head at her, whimsically, laughing a little.

"Have you no antidote for your philters, madame?" he demanded. "Does not your magic carpet carry one back to one's home?"

"That," said she, smiling up at him, "is as one weeshes. Would you be aggain from w'ere you started, monsieur?"

"No, madame," said Captain Berkeley, "I think not." And, after that, neither of them spoke for a time.

"What did you mean, madame," asked Captain Berkeley, at last, "what did you mean, two days ago, when we met for the first time, by accident, in the garden, when you said that I was very different from what you had expected to see—when you refused, at first, to believe that I could be Captain Berkeley?"

"That is not a fair question, monsieur."

"What did you mean, madame?" he persisted.

"You did not look," said she, "the man w'at could 'ave done the theengs they 'ave tol' me you did. You did not look the sort of man 'oo 'ad leeve' the life they tol' me of, 'oo 'ad broken women's 'earts for—for to amuse yourself. You looked differen', monsieur—ah, so ver' differen'! Me, I could not believe it was you. Ah, monsieur, monsieur!" she cried, and her voice was not quite steady, and her eyes were full of a distress that Captain Berkeley would not let himself see; "w'y is a man allow' to be so? W'y does *le bon Dieu* let a man look as you look, an' speak as you speak, an' seem to be w'at you seem to be, monsieur, w'en the man 'as been w'at you 'ave been—selfish always, an' quite, quite 'eartless? W'at protection shall a woman 'ave w'en she cannot tell w'at a man is from w'at 'e seem' to be? Ah, yes," she cried, when he would have spoken, "I 'ave no right to say these theengs; you need not tell me that, monsieur.

Bot let me take the right. Per'aps, I may save some woman's 'eart from breaking. It is not as if I were a girl, or as if I were a—a widow, like Varvara. Me, I may say w'at they may not, biccuse I am a married woman. Some day, you will marry, monsieur, yes? Some day, you will fall in love—real love. Ah, w'at kin' of a 'eart can you breeng to the woman you love, *monsieur le capitaine*? W'at can you say to 'er that you 'ave not said biffore to a dozen othaires?"

"Oh, madame!" said Captain Berkeley, very low, and his face had grown pale and drawn and haggard; "oh, madame, it is true that I could bring her no untried boy's affection. The heart I should lay at her feet would have been more than once tenanted, and it would be somewhat worn and marked by hard usage. I could not swear her unspoken vows, madame, or call her by unfamiliar terms of endearment. She would find me a little hardened by experience, a little embittered by something else than joy. But the heart I brought for her keeping would be an honest one, marquise, swept and empty of old furniture, garnished for her alone. There would be no ghosts of old tenants to rise up and frighten her, no claimant with a better right than hers. And, if the words I should use to her, if the vows I should swear, were old words and forsworn vows, they would be new for her, and fresh and sacred, and all my life would lie in the hollow of her hand.

"It is true, as they say, that I have loved—or thought I loved—more than once or twice or three times, but, when they have said that I broke hearts for play, that I tried to make women love me for my amusement, they have lied. I have never tried to make a woman love me, unless I loved her, madame, and I have never deliberately put a woman's love aside, save when the law demanded it, or after she had ceased to care for me. And, finally, if the gossips have busied themselves with me, as it seems they have done, it was because circumstances made the thing conspicuous, and not because the thing

itself was worthy of note." When he had finished, he sat still, with hands clapping and unclapping upon his knees, and haggard eyes that stared unheeding over the sea.

The marquise watched him for a long time, and it was well that neither the marquis nor Varvara zu Ehrenstern was there to see the pain and—something else, that shone in her great eyes. "You cannot be telling a lie," she said, at last, very gently; "it is impossible that you are telling a lie. See, I believe you, monsieur—all you 'ave said. Per'aps, I have wrong' you. They 'ave tell me such theengs! I wondaire if you could do w'at you say—if any man could do it—breeng to the woman you love a heart not 'aunted by those 'oo 'ave dwel' in it biffore. I wondaire if any man can do that, monsieur. I wondaire— 'Ave I wrong' you, *monsieur le capitaine*? Ah, I would not do that, me. An' yet—yet I 'ope I 'ave done it; I 'ope it is as you say, biccasse then you will be ver' 'appy, *n'est-ce pas*? An' some woman, she will be 'appy, too. You are not 'appy now, monsieur, no. Me, I 'ave seen that from the firs' moment. *Hélas!* my frien', there is much in thees worl', *ici bas*, w'ich is not 'appiness—much that is bittaire for us all; yes?" She broke off, with a catch in her breath; and, for another space, neither of them spoke. Then, "Monsieur!" she said, very timidly.

"What is it you would ask, madame?" said he.

"Jus' now, monsieur," said the marquise, still timidly, "jus' now, w'en you speak of w'at you could breeng to the woman you love', 'ow you could love 'er, you—you 'ave speak ver' strong, monsieur, as if—as if—is there such a woman, *monsieur le capitaine*? Is there some woman w'at you love, now?"

"Yes, madame," said he, very low; and the marquise's breath caught sharply again.

"A-ah!" said she, in a half-whisper; and, after a moment, "monsieur!"

"Yes?" answered Captain Berkeley.

"Monsieur," she repeated, faltering,

"I know I should not ask—I know there is no reason w'y I should know, bot—'oo is the woman, monsieur? Will you tell me 'oo is the woman?"

"That I may never tell you, madame," he said.

"Nevvaire, monsieur?"

"I think never, madame," said he.

"I wondaire," said the marquise, and as if she spoke to herself, "I wondaire if it is Varvara. Ah, yes, yes; it mus' be. W'y could you not tell me, monsieur? Yes, it is Varvara! I 'ave watch' you, an' I 'ave watch' 'er. Oh, monsieur, do you love 'er ver', ver' much, weeth *all* your 'eart? If you do not love 'er so, leave 'er, monsieur; do not make 'er to love you. Ah, yes; it is Varvara! Me, I 'ave seen. You will make 'er love you, will you not? An' then you will marry 'er, and take 'er away, an' you will both be 'appy al-ways, yes? An' me—me, I shall be glad. Yes, of course, glad—ah, so glad! Monsieur, monsieur, you will be kin' to 'er, an' true to 'er, an' nevvaire stop loving 'er, for she is ver' lovely, as lovely as she is beautiful. She is almos' the only frien' I 'ave."

She broke off again, and they sat for a time, silent. Then, at last, she rose, shaking out her skirts. "Come, monsieur," said she, with a little, uncertain laugh; "come, we mus' go back to the othaires. We 'ave been too long away." And she came close to him, and put out her hand. "I theenk I 'ave done you a great wrong, *monsieur le capitaine*," she continued. "I beg you to forgive me, if you can. An'—an' I will do all I can—oh, all I can to 'elp you with—'er; all I can, monsieur!"

"Oh, madame, madame!" cried Captain Berkeley. He bent over the hand that she held out to him, kissing it, as one might kiss a queen's hand. When the marquise drew it away it was not quite steady, and her face was pale.

IX

"I THINK," said Captain Berkeley, "that I shall go over to Kersalec this

morning to make my call upon the marquis. It might be interesting."

"Yes," said the earl, nodding, "it might be very interesting. I should go by all means. I expect you will see and hear some strange things. The man may or may not be mad, but I fancy there can be no doubt that he has some remarkable knowledge at hand about his ancestors and the conditions here very long ago. I wish he had asked me to come, but he would never do that. We dislike each other—instinctively, I think."

"He is a strange man," said Robert Berkeley. "He takes very little heed of the world about him, I should say. He seldom sees it, and yet he came out of his shell most surprisingly the other day, when they were here at luncheon. He was quite like an ordinary human being. Even his wife noticed. She spoke to me about it."

"It was odd," said the earl, nodding again. "Something must have been stirring him out of his dreams, of late. He was not at all himself. One or two things happened which I did not understand—but, then, I am not acute. Perhaps, it is only a bit of ennui of his daily work, but—I think he has something on his mind. Yes, I should go over there by all means. Have you seen any of them since they were here?"

"I have seen the marquise once," said Berkeley, "but only for a few moments. She tactfully withdrew to allow me a tête-à-tête with the countess. I have seen the countess twice."

The old gentleman laughed, heartily. "I shall dance at the wedding," said he, "and with satisfaction. You are well suited, you two."

"So the marquise told me," said Captain Berkeley. "I have not the countess's opinion on the subject. Well, I must be going. I shall be back for luncheon."

On the sheltered terrace at Ker-salec, he found the marquise, alone, with a bit of sewing. A newspaper lay on a table beside her. When she saw him in the avenue, she rose and

made as if she would go in. Then, she sat down again, as if she knew that he must have seen her, and that her act would appear the height of rudeness.

"Good morning, madame," said Captain Berkeley, cheerfully. "How dare you look so fierce and forbidding on a fine, fresh day like this? It's not Christian. I don't believe," he went on, in a severe tone, "I don't believe you said your prayers this morning."

"I al-ways say my prayers," cried the marquise, indignantly.

"Ah?" said Captain Berkeley, with sympathy. "That must leave you very little time for other things. Then, if you have said your prayers," he continued, "I can think of nothing which should put you in such a humor—unless you have had my sins at heart again." But the marquise made no answer, and he went on past her, shaking his head, sorrowfully. "You are very depressing," he sighed. "I dare say, it is only because your maid was slow about your hair, or because the coffee was bad, but you are quite impossible. I am going to get your husband to tell me stories."

But he had gone no farther than the open door of the château when she spoke. "Captain Berkeley," she said.

"Yes, madame?" said Captain Berkeley, turning back from the door.

She took the open newspaper from the table beside her, and held it in her lap, looking down at it, as if she did not wish to meet his eyes. "Captain Berkeley," she said again, in a low voice, "w'en you said to me, the othaire day, that you 'ave nevvaire make a woman love you unless you 'ave love' er—that you 'ave nevvaire deserted a woman, thrown 'er over w'ile she love' you, did you tell a lie?"

"No, madame," said Captain Berkeley. "I have never told you a lie, and I never shall. I do not lie."

"It was a lie, monsieur," said she.

"No, madame," said he, again. But the marquise held out to him the newspaper which she had in her lap, and pointed to a paragraph. The journal was a small, semi-society sheet, published daily in Paris, in English. It made a feature of personal paragraphs relating to the movements of people well known in the social world of the Continent, and these paragraphs were, as is common in such cases, often of the most trivial description, merely idle, and sometimes very ill-natured, gossip.

The paragraph to which the Marquise de Kersalec called Captain Berkeley's attention, chronicled the death of a certain woman of rank and social distinction—a death, the cause of which had puzzled the physicians; but those in the secret knew it to be nothing else than a broken heart. The paragraph then went on to recall a story with which, it said, many of its readers would be familiar, of the infatuation of this titled woman for a young diplomatist, late a captain in the British cavalry, whose love-affairs with other women of note were the talk of Europe. It was this man's heartless treatment of the deceased, claimed the journal, in spite of the long-continued efforts of an intimate friend of the two, which brought the woman to her death.

Captain Berkeley read the notice through, with flushing face, and, when he had finished, his eyes blazed across the paper at the Marquise de Kersalec. "This," said he, fiercely, "is a bare-faced and contemptible—" But, all at once, he stopped, and the marquise saw in his face the flash of some sudden thought.

"Wait!" he went on, swiftly, "wait a moment! Let me think. Good God, what a thing!" He took a few steps back and forth before her, his head bent, his face frowning and his hands smiting each other, as if he were fighting within himself over something momentous.

Then, at last, he halted beside the table, and laid his hand upon the paper, which he had dropped there. "I cannot deny this, madame," said he, in a low tone.

"It is true, then, monsieur?" she asked.

"Yes, madame," said he, and sighed; "yes, it is true."

"An'—the othaire day," persisted the marquise, "the othaire day, monsieur, you lied? An' jus' now, w'en you said that you 'ave al-ways tell the truth to me, you 'ave lied aggain?"

Captain Berkeley raised to hers the saddest eyes she had ever seen. "Yes, madame," said he, and turned away.

The marquise rose from her chair, facing him. Her eyes flashed, and her voice was hard. "Then," said she, "I 'ave been right abbout you from the firs', in spite of w'at they all say. An' you are worse than a breaker of 'earts, you are a—a—no, I will not call any man w'at you 'ave confess' yourself to be." She looked up over his shoulder, and her voice dropped. "'Ere come' the marquis," said she. "You will please not let—let this w'ich we 'ave said make any difference with 'im or with—the countess. After all, that dead woman is beyon' your tortures now, monsieur, an' it all make' no difference to any one—bot me."

Captain Berkeley swung about toward the Marquis de Kersalec, and his face changed so swiftly that the woman looked at him with an unwilling admiration.

"At leas' 'e is a brave man!" she murmured to herself.

"Good morning," said Captain Berkeley, as the marquis drew near. "I have come to hold you to your promise. I hope you have not forgotten it."

"No," said his host, smiling, "I am so far from forgetting it that I was thinking of you only this morning, wishing that you would come to Kersalec." He looked doubtfully toward his wife, as if hesitating to take Captain Berkeley away at once, and thus leave her alone, for he was very careful and punctilious in these little matters of politeness.

But the marquise made a gesture of dismissal. "Do not wait 'ere on my account," she begged. "The countess is coming out at once to sit with me."

The two men bowed and left her, and went in the open door of the château, through a long, narrow corridor, high-arched with stone, and very gloomy, and through many rooms beyond, dim and bare and musty with age.

They came, at last, to a door, over which hung a curtain of tapestry, and the marquis, who was leading, halted and thrust aside the hangings.

"These are my rooms," said he, standing aside for young Berkeley to enter.

There was first a little waiting-chamber, containing a table and two or three chairs, and, beyond it, with only a half-drawn curtain between, was the study of the Marquis de Kersalec. It was a great room, wide, and long, with an oak-beamed ceiling. It stretched along that side of the château which faced the sea, and there came from below, at the foot of the cliff, a constant murmur, faint and rhythmic, of waters beating upon rocks. It was a dim room, for the long row of casemented windows, narrow and high-set, which filled nearly all of the seaward wall, were of stained and painted glass, and the morning light came through this glass in faint beams, crimson and gold and blue and olive, and lay in splashes upon the floor and upon the furniture. In the afternoon, when the sun reached that side of the castle, the effect must have been very beautiful. There was tapestry upon the walls, faded and discolored. Read from left to right it told some strange story of knightly adventure—Perronik's quest of the cup and spear, perhaps. Also, there were stands of arms, and suits of armor. Some of this armor was of a pattern which Berkeley, albeit a student in these matters, had never before seen. And there were high book-shelves of oak, filled with great volumes in white vellum, all stained, save certain ones which held rolls of manuscript upon skin, like the Roman and Greek manuscripts, and these were enclosed in cases with glass doors. In the dim, far corners of the room burned bronze

lamps, unmistakably Roman in design, and their oil emitted a perfume which filled the air, and showed against the light of the windows, in thin smoke-wreaths. Near the centre of the room, but a little toward the light from the windows, was a table of oak, large enough to take its place in that great room. This was littered with sheets of manuscript, and with books open or closed, and with maps, and with all such articles as a writer must employ.

Captain Berkeley dropped into the big chair of hewn oak to which the marquis waved him, and his eyes went from end to end of the long chamber. "What a wonderful room!" he said, in English; and then he bethought himself, and repeated his remark in French, for the marquis understood scarcely a word of the other tongue.

De Kersalec nodded across the great table. "It is a good room," said he. "It has a—it has an atmosphere. It is a little apart from that world out there."

And what he said was true. The huge, dim place, with its colored lights and its incense and its old tapestries, had an atmosphere of its own, which laid hold upon one at entering. It was apart from that world out there. It belonged to things very long dead—centuries gone by.

"I must give you a cigarette," said the marquis, "and a glass of wine. They tell us that we must go to your England for the Oporto, which seems curious, but this, I think, is not altogether bad. It is very old and it is of a good year. You shall judge."

Then, when he had poured out the wine, and it had been duly praised by Captain Berkeley, and when they had lighted their cigarettes, he sat for a time silent, turning his little glass between his fingers, and frowning thoughtfully down upon it.

"You wish, monsieur, to know something about the city which lies—out there," said he, at last, "and of those who made it, and of those who sunk it under the sea." It was curious that he should have used almost exactly the words which the Earl of Strope and

Varvara zu Ehrenstern had used a few days before. "I hardly know where to begin," he said, in a hesitating tone. "It is a great subject to deal with in an hour; it is like trying to tell, in a sitting, the history of the Egyptian or the Roman wars. We are a very ancient people, monsieur, we Celts. We were here, in Armorica, when the Romans came, under Julius Cæsar, fighting us with strange tactics, and teaching us how to build walls and roads. And, when we had learned all the Romans could teach, we drove them southward, into Gaul, and went on our way, wiser and somewhat altered. Yes, we are a very ancient people, and we walk by ourselves, as always. We do not mix with other races. We Bretons are pure of blood, and, southward, the Basques in Spain—Celts as we are—stand apart, pure and unmixed, and your Welsh and your Scotch and your Irish, all Celts, are slow to give up their characteristics—to marry with outlanders. It was with us that Christianity took its root in the North, and flowered, in spite of all opposition. We fought for it, shed our blood for it, vowed our lives to it—and made the civilization you have to-day. St. Patrice, St. Radok, St. Hervé! Great names, *monsieur le capitaine*, Irish, Cambrian, Breton! Europe owes more to them than she knows.

"Now, in the fourth and fifth centuries, as we count time, a great city grew up here about the Pointe du Raz, greater than anything else in the North, so great that when Paris was built and began to be of importance, it took its name from the other—*par-et-is*; that is to say, equal to Is. All that part of Brittany which is called Cornouailles, was governed from Is, and much of Leon and the Pays de Vannes. At the beginning of the sixth century, the king in Is was Gradlon, and in his youth he was a great warrior, stern and hard toward his people. But, as he grew old, the two great priests in Brittany, St. Guénolé and St. Corentin, turned his heart, and he became a Christian, very

gentle and very pious—so gentle, alas, that, bit by bit, his authority slipped from him, and his people went ways of their own. Is became infamous for its debauchery, and Ker-Ahés, which was Carhaix, was not at all behind it.

"Gradlon had a daughter called Ahés, very beautiful and very evil, monsieur—all that is wickedest, all that is most licentious. Not the prayers of her father, nor the warnings of St. Guénolé and St. Corentin, who preached often in Is, could move her. They only turned her to grosser madresses. It was a crowning folly which destroyed the city. One of her lovers dared her to open the great central water gate in the dike, which held the sea at bay. He dared her to open the gate in a time of *grande marée*—when tides are highest. Only the king had the keys, and he never parted with them. But Ahés stole to his chamber by night, and took the keys from his neck. She must have been quite mad. No sane person would have done such a thing. But, after all, *monsieur le capitaine*, it was not a dissolute woman who destroyed Is, it was the wrath of God, Who had grown tired of the city's debauchery; Ahés was but His instrument.

"When the king awoke, the sea was in the streets of Is, driven before a tempest greater than any man had ever before seen. St. Guénolé, mounted upon his horse, and holding the king's war charger, called upon his sovereign to save himself, but Gradlon would not go till he had found his daughter, whom he loved most dearly in spite of her sins, and had set her behind him upon the horse. Then, they rode, and the sea dashed behind them, and the wind brought the sound of groans and shrieks and falling buildings. They rode fast, but the sea drove faster, till a wave caught the two horses, and set them swimming. Then, out of the storm's roar, came a great voice that cried, 'Gradlon, Gradlon, if you would not perish, loose that demon whom you carry behind you!' And, at the sound, the arms of Ahés slipped from her father's neck, and she

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disappeared in the waves. Then, the surge drew back, and the horses took footing again. They reached the cliffs at Landévennec, and, safe above the flood, the two men turned to look back. A black cloud, like a funeral pall, hung over the place, and lightnings flashed from it. The wind was very terrible—terrible enough to tear the breath from one's mouth—and, before it, waves like great mountain ranges, snow-capped, rolled in upon the lost city, and, with the thunder of their breaking, came always the crash of falling buildings, and the shrieks of those who had taken to the house-tops for shelter.

"St. Guénolé was upon his knees, praying to the God of wrath; but Gradlon stood looking back upon God's work. The wind blew the white hair across his eyes, and tore at the royal mantle, and the spray from the foot of the cliff wet his face, but he did not move or speak. And, while he watched, a wave came in out of the gloom beyond, greater than any of the others; it seemed to brush the low-hanging cloud with its crest of gray-white. It swept across the city, even with the tops of the highest buildings, even with the church spires; and Gradlon's eyes closed for an instant. Then, a wonderful thing happened, for, after the roar of the last great wave had passed, there came a sudden calm, most unnatural. The pall of cloud opened, and the moonlight shone through, over a black, still waste of water—where the city of Is had been. Then, the king wept, very bitterly, as old men weep who have seen the ruin of all they love—so bitterly that the saint cried out with pity.

"'Gradlon, Gradlon!' said he, 'the mercy of God, which has saved you, may yet save Is. Pray!' And he prepared to say the mass upon the very rock where they stood. And, when he came to the Communion, he had an inspiration from the God Who loved him.

"'O king!' he cried, turning to Gradlon, with the chalice in his hand—he had saved the sacred vessels from

the flood, and was carrying them in his mantle—'O king; the Blood of Christ, which saved the world, shall yet save the city of Is!' And he hurled the cup, with its drop of precious wine, into the bay. Afterward, he had a revelation. The city had not perished; it was resting, unharmed, under the sea. It should, one day, reappear to do penance, but only when the drop of Christ's Blood, poured by Guénolé, should be recovered, and the mass he had begun should be finished. *Hélas! monsieur le capitaine*, the mass has never been finished.

"Near the spot where the king and St. Guénolé landed, there was a heathen altar, a stone where human sacrifices were made. The king took oath to build above it a church to Our Lady who had saved him, and this he did, calling it, Notre Dame de Rumengol, or Notre Dame de Tout Remède. You may see the chapel now, monsieur, though it has been several times rebuilt. Also, he founded an abbey at Landévennec, and there he lived the rest of his life, and died, and there his tomb is, to-day, in the crypt where all may see it. He was a very noble man. Pray for him!

"There is little more to tell. While the king and Guénolé sought safety from the flood, toward Landévennec, a mere handful of others gained the nearer heights. Nearly all of the city's inhabitants were drowned. The few saved founded two villages, in Cléden and in Goulien, called the villages of Kerisit, and the people themselves and their descendants were long known as 'ar K'herisided'—inhabitants of Is. Among them was one of the king's sons, and it is from this man that my wife and I are both descended. We are cousins."

The marquis rose with a sigh, as if he had finished, and turned toward the windows, through which the light came in rays of gorgeous color. He opened one of them, and, at once, the beat of the sea upon the cliff's foot became a roar; and a gust of wind, fresh and strange upon that scent-

laden air, came into the room, and rustled the papers on the great table. But the marquis stood for a long time by the open window, staring out across the Baie des Trépassés.

Captain Berkeley sat still in his chair, as he had sat during all of the marquis's tale, sprawling a little, his eyes fixed and wide. His cigarette had long since gone out, but he did not know, and it hung neglected from his lips, and scattered ashes on his knees.

The marquis turned back into the room, and drew toward him one of the folded papers which lay upon the table. "Here," said he, in his gentle, tired voice, "is a map of the city of Is. It is, as you will see, a copy. I made it, myself, from the ancient manuscript—which I still have, but it is sealed up in its case. The dotted line in black is the line of the coast as it exists to-day. The city stretched, you see, around what is now the Pointe du Raz, from Gamelle, in the Baie d'Audierne, to Castel-ar-Roch, under Goulien, in the Baie de Douarnenez. Its centre, with the palaces of the king, was here in the Baie des Trépassés. Troguer, the village above the little St. They chapel, was one of its suburbs. You may see to-day, at Troguer, the walls of an ancient road which leads down toward the Baie des Trépassés. At Laoual was the chapel of St. Guénolé, where the seigneurs of the court went to hear mass—'forty mantles of purple cloth,' as the manuscripts have it. You will see the water gates marked. There were twelve of them, and the great central one, called the Puits, was that which Ahés, in her folly, opened."

Captain Berkeley stared down at the map, only half comprehending what he saw. He noted, absently, how different was the coast from the outline of to-day; how the great Pointe du Raz and Pointe du Van were but heights, leading down to a seaside plain; how the wide Baie de Douarnenez was dry land; and how the Ile de Sein, now six miles away, was separated from the mainland only

by a broad canal. And he looked up at the pale, habitually tired face of the Marquis de Kersalec, and a sudden wave of half-understanding and of pity and of dawning respect rose in him for this lonely man, who should be a king, but whom people called mad. He wondered if the man was really mad, yet with none of the amused contempt, none of the irritation, he had felt before. The room had laid its spell upon him—the room and the strange, quaint tale, and, above all, the quiet certainty of him who told it that the tale was true. He felt, dimly, that, later on, when he should be back in the good modern world of sunshine and practical things, when he should be talking it all over with the old earl, he would laugh and wonder how it could ever have seemed believable. But, at present, he felt not at all like laughing. The Roman lamps winked red eyes at him from the gloom beyond; little, blue-white veils of smoke, heavy with incense, drifted between him and the windows, wreathing the head of the man who sat across the table. The sea was a regular, rhythmical murmur again, a dragging sigh from very far away.

"And," said Captain Berkeley, a bit timidly, a bit shamefacedly, "and you—you have—certain hopes, sir? You believe that—that the city lies intact down—yonder? You believe that it may one day rise again?"

But the Marquis de Kersalec shook his head, and rested it upon his hands, his elbows on the table before him.

"Hopes that I dare not hope, monsieur," said he, very sadly; "beliefs that words make ridiculous. Who knows? There are many strange things. A Breton must dream his dreams. Who knows?"

"What did you mean, sir," persisted Captain Berkeley, "by what you said of the drop of Blood, that Guénolé poured into the sea, which must be recovered; by what you said of the mass, which was begun and must be finished? I do not understand."

But the marquis shook his bowed

head, again. "I cannot tell you, monsieur," said he. "What I repeated to you was a literal translation of the manuscript left by Guénolé. No one now can read the riddle—can tell what is meant by recovering the drop of Christ's Blood, or how the mass of Is may be finished. If only one knew! The peasants and fishermen about the point would tell you their version of it, if you might go among them, understanding the Breton tongue. There are many tales. There is one of a fisherman in the Baie des Trépassés, who followed a mysterious stranger overboard, and down to the bottom of the sea, where he found himself in the streets of Is. He saw, near at hand, the cathedral, and entered. The church was full of people, dressed in an ancient fashion. The priest was saying mass, and, as the fisherman entered, he cried, '*Dominus vobiscum!*' No one replied, and the priest repeated the words thrice or more, in a tone of keenest supplication, almost of agony. The fisherman wondered why no one answered, and turned toward his neighbor, but was horrified to see that the man was dead—a skeleton in clothes. The man next beyond was dead, also; every one in the church was a thing of bones. The fisherman uttered a cry of terror, and rushed out into the street, followed by a strange, whispering sigh of grief, which seemed to come from all that dreadful congregation. In the porch, a man caught him by the arm, demanding to know why he had not replied to the priest the customary, '*Et cum spiritu tuo,*' and explaining that, if he had but said those words, the mass of Is would have been completed, and the city saved.

"That is one tale; there are others much like it. In another, the visitor should have given a coin when the *offrande* was taken up. One coin from a living person, given in free will, would have saved the city. In all the tales, you will find that some voluntary good act, some participation of a living man in the dead city's mass, is necessary to work the great

miracle. They are but tales! Who knows the truth, *monsieur le capitaine*? Would God it were I! This is part of the city's punishment: that not even those who would gladly die for her, may know how her salvation should be worked.

"That the city of Is once stood here, on our north coast, and was great and prosperous, and that it was destroyed for its sins by the sea, I can and shall prove to all men; for I have many proofs to offer—many, many proofs. But, for the city itself, I can do—nothing."

He rose to his feet, and made a gesture outward, toward the sea. "She lies there, *monsieur le capitaine!*" said he, and his voice had risen, and his great eyes were flashing; "she lies there, and I, who should be her king, may do nothing to aid her."

Then, all at once, his little flame of passion died, and he dropped back once more into his chair, covering his face with his hands. "I, who would die to aid her!" he said, under his breath, brokenly. "Oh, monsieur, the plight of Is, and her sins and her suffering, are upon my soul, and it is heavy. What can I do for her? I can tell the world as much as it is best to tell, but I cannot raise the dead. I am a very lonely man, *monsieur le capitaine*. I have no friends, and I see few people. They do not understand, and they think that I am mad—I, who should wear a crown, and sit upon a throne." He ceased speaking, for his voice was beyond control.

Captain Berkeley looked away, frowning and twisting uneasily in his chair. It is not a comfortable thing to see a man overcome by grief. But, along with his discomfort and his British helplessness in the face of anything like a scene, there came, for a moment, something like anger and disillusionment, a brief breaking of the spell that was upon him. "The man is mad," he said to himself, "quite mad; and I am nearly as mad to sit here listening to such stuff. A city to rise from the sea—my word!" And he scowled, sullen-

ly, at the bowed head across the table, and at the thin, white, nervous fingers clasped above.

This was *her* husband, he said to himself, in almost savage disgust, this sobbing bundle of nerves, who shut himself away from the world, away from *her*, to dream mad dreams of ancient miracles, and to prattle of impossible cities that should rise from the sea. This was *her* husband!

And then, at the thought of *her*, his own trouble came upon him like a flood; the recollection of his irretrievable ruin with *her*—for he knew that he could never explain away this last difficulty, that he could never show *her* that it was all a strange blunder, never stand, in *her* eyes, an honorable man. It came over him in a sudden, great flood, and he bowed his head to it, grimly, not like the overwrought man across the table, but with stern bitterness. And he sat thus, with his head in his hands, for a long time, quite still.

It was the dashing of water upon the windows that roused him. Outside, the wind and the sea had been rising swiftly, and the sky was covered with mottled clouds, thin and high. The rhythmic sigh of the waves had grown to a loud roar, and, now and then, the spray from a wave, dashing higher up the cliff than its fellows, was caught by the wind, and whirled against the face of the castle.

The Marquis de Kersalec lifted his pale face, and his eyes were dull and absent. "Was that a wave?" said he. "The sea is mounting. We shall have a storm, presently."

He rose to his feet, and moved, a bit wearily, across the room. "I must ask you to pardon me," he said; "I fear I have been rude. I see so few people, nowadays, that my manners become lamentable. Would you care to look at the manuscripts? I have some very valuable ones, quite unique. You will understand better what I said, as to having indisputable proofs of the existence and life of the city of Is. You may also be interested in this armor and these vessels and

weapons. The Roman influence is curiously plain in their design."

Then, when Captain Berkeley had looked over all the collection—and there were many strange and interesting things—and was making his adieus, the marquis looked into his eyes, with a little, sad, whimsical smile. "No," said he, "do not thank me. I should like to thank you for coming. You are not quite like the others. I fancy you have been interested. You are thinking, for the moment, that I am a little mad, or very mad, as you like; but you will neither laugh nor show that you are bored. No, you are not like the others."

He paused an instant, looking at the younger man, wistfully. "You have not had a very happy life, monsieur," he went on. "I do not know why, and I do not know in what particulars you have been unhappy, but you bear the marks of grief. Perhaps, that is why you will not laugh at what you call, in your mind, my dreams. One sorrow respects another, and we both have our sorrows. Good-bye, *monsieur le capitaine*. Yes, I thank you for coming to see me."

X

WHILE Captain Berkeley was closeted with the marquis, hearing strange tales, and seeing strange things, the old Earl of Strobe appeared in the garden, and lifted his disreputable deer-stalker's cap to the marquise, who still sat, beside her little table, on the terrace above.

"Good morning, madame," said he. "I have seized this particular time to call, because I knew that I should not be forestalled, or interrupted, by that tiresome guest of mine, who has become a great trial to me. Nowadays, I never find you, or the countess, alone; Robert Berkeley is always hanging about. I think I shall send him back to Paris."

He mounted the steps, smiling with satisfaction, and sat down in one of the chairs of osier, which creaked under

his great frame. Then, he drew down his eyebrows, and looked sharply at the Marquise de Kersalec.

"What is the matter?" he demanded, in his abrupt tone. "You have been weeping." And he scowled at her, in a quite intimidating fashion.

"Well, if I 'ave," said the marquise, with some spirit, "it is ver' bad mannares for you to—to notice, an' to—to speak of it. Any'ow, it is nothing—nothing at all."

"I don't believe it," said the earl, frankly; "and, as for my manners, I make no pretense of having any. Old men may take refuge behind their white hairs; they have peculiar privileges. It annoys me to see you unhappy. Ah, here comes the countess! I am doubly fortunate to find you both; and without that irritating Berkeley person in the way. Countess, I hope you are in a very good humor. The marquise has just been snapping at me, most malevolently."

Varvara zu Ehrenstern sat down, upon the broad balustrade of the terrace, and laughed gaily. "Oh, I—I am in an excellent humor, sir," said she; "I was never better. We are going to have a storm, a proper one; do you hear that wind? A storm always fills me with pleasant excitement. I like big, strong things—and people," she added, laughing again. "But you must not mind Aurélie. She has an abominable temper, really. What paper have you, there, *chérie*? Oh!"

The earl noted the sudden change of tone, and looked at the newspaper which still lay upon the little table. "Ah," said he; "one of those scandal-mongers?" He took it up, idly, and glanced down its columns. Then, all at once, he gave a sudden exclamation, and looked up sharply at the two women.

"Yes," said the Countess zu Ehrenstern, in answer to his glance, "there is something about your friend, Captain Berkeley, there. I dare say the thing is no news to you."

The old gentleman read the article through, slowly, and, as he read, his face flushed, and his great white eye-

brows began to twitch, and to work up and down, after their fashion. Then, when he had finished, he crumpled the sheet in one of his strong hands, and shook it, angrily, in the air. "Did you believe that?" he demanded, fiercely; "did you believe that contemptible slander? did you?"

The countess shrugged her shoulders, and smiled. "Oh, *quant à ça*," said she, "it all tallies with Captain Berkeley's general reputation, doesn't it? It is rather nasty, of course. Still, one must not expect men of the world to be quite—Galahads, as you yourself said the other day. Aurélie was a little disturbed by it, but, then, Aurélie is such a difficult sort of person to live up to—such a story-book sort of person!" She turned toward the other woman, laughing.

But the marquise's eyes were fixed upon the earl. They were bright with excitement, and her face was pale. "It is not—true?" she asked, slowly; "not—true?" And her eyes never left the earl's face.

"It is a vile and malignant lie!" cried the old gentleman, shaking the crumpled paper in his fist. "It is a poisonous, contemptible slander; and it would give me great pleasure to lay hands upon the cur who wrote it. I hope it will never come to Robert Berkeley's eyes. It would hurt him more than I can say."

The Marquise de Kersalec drew a sharp breath. "It—it 'as come to 'is eyes," she said, very low. "Me, I 'ave show' it to 'im—this morning."

The old gentleman dropped the crumpled paper to the ground, and his great white eyebrows drew down again. "Then, you believed it, too, madame?" said he; "you, too?"

The marquise made a forlorn gesture with both her hands, and her eyes never left his—they were very wide and dark, and full of a distress which the earl was too angry to see. "'E would not deny it!" she cried, piteously. "'E said it was true—true!"

"Deny it?" roared the earl, in a savage tone; "deny it? Damme, madame, he couldn't deny it! It is

his cursedly quixotic sense of honor!" He struck the little table beside him with his open palm, and the table jumped and creaked.

"The man that wretched screech gossips about," he went on, "the man who broke that woman's heart, and acted like a—yes, like a cad, though he was otherwise a gentleman and a brave officer, was Berkeley's friend, Reverley, who died a few weeks ago, and whom Berkeley loved like a brother. Berkeley himself did all that a human being could do to patch the thing up, and to get Reverley to do the proper thing, but to no purpose. Deny it? Of course, he wouldn't deny it, and lay it upon a dead man! That cursed sheet has got the story as badly twisted as most of this abominable society gossip is twisted. I did not suppose any one ever believed a tale from such a source."

He rose, still frowning, and took up his cap and stick. "That wretched thing has spoiled my temper for the day," said he, "that, and the fact that you ladies would believe it at once. If you will pardon me, I will go home. I am not pleasant company when I am angry."

The Marquise de Kersalec gave a protesting cry, and held out one hand, as if she would stop him; but the earl bowed, and went down the steps and through the garden, holding himself very stiff, and not looking back.

Varvara zu Ehrenstern sat upon the balustrade of the terrace, watching him, and there was a light of excitement, of admiration, in her eyes. She even smiled.

"Isn't he fine?" she cried. "Isn't he splendid when he is angry! Of course, I am sorry he went away, but it was worth while to see him in a rage. I should like once to see him angry at a man, genuinely angry, you know. It would be something to watch." She turned toward the other woman, laughing; but the Marquise de Kersalec had dropped her head upon her arms, over the little table, and was sobbing, very quietly.

"Why, you goose!" cried the

Countess zu Ehrenstern; and she slipped an arm about the bowed shoulders, raising the other's head to her bosom, in the tender way women have. "You silly little dear of a goose! He will be over it to-morrow. He meant nothing; it was all his childish temper. And he was angry at the paper, anyhow, not at you—at us. Oh, my dear, my dear, whenever will you learn not to take things three times as seriously as they are meant? Fancy weeping over the earl's bad temper!"

But the marquise shook the head that rested against the other's shoulder. "You do not understand," she said. "I do not weep over the earl's bad temper—though 'e 'ad reason for it, yes. Oh, dearest, dearest, then it was not true, that dreadful story? It was all a lie?"

"Yes," said the countess, stroking the black hair, "yes, it would seem that it was all a lie. I am glad."

"Glad!" murmured the Marquise de Kersalec; "glad! Oh, more than that, glad is so little!" She pressed her face against the countess's shoulder, and it whitened a trifle. "I—I made 'im say it was true," she said. "I called 'im—ah, dreadful things! I made 'im say that 'e 'ad lied to me—and 'e said it. 'E was willing that I should thenk so of 'im, to shield a dead man. But 'e is brave; oh, 'e is brave!" She turned again in her friend's arms, looking up into her face. "Do you love 'im ver' much, *mignonne*?" she demanded. "Are you *quite* sure that you love 'im ver' much, as much as 'e deserves—as much as 'e love' you?"

"Love him!" cried the Countess zu Ehrenstern, laughing amazedly; "love him! What makes you think I love him at all? And what possible reason have you for thinking that he loves me? Oh, child, child, when will you grow up? You run away with such mad notions, and coddle them, all by yourself, till you're quite persuaded that they are true. What makes you think that Captain Berkeley and I care about each other?" She laughed again.

But the marquise did not laugh with her; she only looked very anxiously into her eyes, as if searching for something behind the pretense of fun. "Don't joke," she pleaded, shaking her head. "It is no joke, that. It is ver', ver' serious. I—I know that 'e loves you—it does not matter 'ow I know it—an', if you should be only playing with 'im—only tormenting 'im—"

"As he has played with and tormented women all his life," broke in the Countess zu Ehrenstern.

"I am not so certain of that—now," said the marquise. "Per'aps those othaire tales were lies, like this one. Per'aps we 'ave been wronging 'im all the time. Oh, *mignonne*, I 'urt 'im, cruelly! I made 'im say that 'e 'ad lied to me, w'en 'e 'ad tol' the truth. I—ah, it was ver' dreadful! Make it up to 'im, Varvara *mia*. Be ver' kin' to 'im. Me, 'e will nevvaire forgive; 'e cannot forgive me, bot you can make 'im glad aggain, so that 'e will forget the othaires. It does not matter about—me."

She turned away her head, but Varvara zu Ehrenstern caught it suddenly between her hands, and held it, looking into the great, clouded eyes for a long time, and her own eyes held a strange expression—startled, almost frightened, and very much puzzled. Then, she shook her own head, laughing once more.

"Oh, no, no, that is impossible!" she said, as if to herself. "For a moment, I almost thought—child, you frighten one, at times, with your absurd seriousness; you give one the strangest notions. I am going to try to cultivate a sense of humor in you. But that would seem quite hopeless, would it not?"

She moved away toward the door of the château, but the marquise held her, by one arm. "You 'ave not answer' my question," said she. "You 'ave not tell me if you—care for 'im really, or not."

The countess looked down at her, oddly, for a moment, and stroked the black hair with her free hand. And

she looked away, across the gardens, oddly still.

"I will not tell you," she said, at last. "You've really no right to ask, of course. Perhaps—perhaps, I don't know; that is very possible. I wonder why you should think that he cares for me." She smiled back over her shoulder, as she went through the door. "When he asks me if I care," she said, "I'll tell him the truth—if I know it. Perhaps, I don't know it, yet."

It was an hour later, and the Marquise de Kersalec still sat beside her little table on the terrace, in spite of the driving clouds and the mounting wind, when Captain Berkeley came out from his call upon the marquis. He was for passing, with a bow, but the marquise rose, and stood in his way, a tragic-eyed figure of woe. Captain Berkeley halted, but he would not meet her eyes.

"Oh, *monsieur le capitaine!*" she said, very softly, "will you—can you forgive me still aggain? I 'ave wrong' you once more. I know it, now."

"Why, madame," said Captain Berkeley, with a sad, whimsical smile, "it has become a habit. But I may not complain; for, if you think ill of me unjustly, for one thing, doubtless I deserve it for other things."

"I shall not think ill of you aggain," said she. "I 'ave learn' not to believe evverything they say; I—oh, monsieur, I did not weesh to believe it. I did not wan' to theenk you w'at—w'at I 'ave call' you. Will you believe that, monsieur, will you?" She looked up at Captain Berkeley, and a wistful, uncertain little smile began at the corners of her lips, and trembled there.

Captain Berkeley met her eyes, and his breath caught, so that he looked quickly away again. "I will believe anything you say, madame," said he, "as always. Indeed, I should like to believe this. How you came to know that what you read in the newspaper yonder is not true, I cannot fancy, but I am glad—for my own sake—and sorry, for the sake of another, that you know the truth. It gave me little

pleasure to lie to you, madame, to exile myself from your good-will."

"I know," she murmured; "oh, I know!"

"Do you, madame?" said Captain Berkeley, again with his sad, whimsical smile.

"An' I know that you are a ver' brave man, monsieur," she went on, looking into his eyes; "braver than any man I know. She—*she* knows about it, too. I do not theenk she—quite believed w'at was in the journal, like me. I theenk she was not angry, like me. It would have been ver', ver' terrible if she 'ad been angry like me, yes? Me—I—it did not make so much difference. Monsieur, I will 'elp you with 'er, as I 'ave promise'. I will 'elp you all I can, to—atone for 'urting you."

"Oh, madame, madame!" cried Captain Berkeley.

XI

A few days later, Captain Berkeley, walking over the moor between Kersalec and Château Kerval, happened upon the Countess zu Ehrenstern. It was near the little chapel, and the countess was sitting on the ground, beside the old shrine of Notre Dame de St. They, with its tiny fountain of stagnant water, and the quaint old stone-carved Madonna, who bore about her neck strings of beads and of copper medallions, for the chance pilgrim. The countess had taken from the statue's neck a medallion, leaving a coin, in payment, on the stone shelf below, and she was holding the trinket in her hand as Captain Berkeley came up to where she sat. It seemed to him that she looked rather tired and worn, and he was surprised, for he had never before seen her so.

She saw him coming, and held out her hand to him, smiling. "I am very glad to see you," she said. "You come at a good time—for me, that is. I have been having a fit of *papillons noirs*—what do you call

them—blues? I have been trying to decide something of importance, which must not be decided lightly, and—why, it has been very, very difficult to decide."

Captain Berkeley sat down on the heather, and knocked the ashes out of his pipe. "And my coming has helped the decision?" he inquired. "I rather think I feel flattered. I have a pleasing sense of importance."

But the countess looked up at him swiftly, as if there were something unconsciously significant behind his words.

"No," she said, after a moment, and turned her eyes away, across the sea. "No, you—I have not decided, yet. No, your coming had nothing—I was only glad to be relieved from thinking—and glad to see you, on general grounds. Somehow, we seem not to have seen much of each other very lately."

"That is so," said Captain Berkeley, in a tone of slight surprise; "that is so; we have not. I wonder why."

"I wonder," echoed the Countess zu Ehrenstern. "I have not seen you, have I," she went on, "since your call upon the marquis, the other day? Do you still think he is mad?"

Captain Berkeley kicked at the turf, with a sort of resentment, of irritability. "Mad? Of course, he is mad! He must be mad, or the sanity of all the rest of us is mania. Fancy a man who believes that a city is buried intact out there, under the sea, and that it will rise again, by some extraordinary miracle! Oh, yes; he is mad, right enough."

"Oh," said the countess, "I don't fancy that he quite believes it will actually rise again. He has a Breton's dreams of it, and a Breton's dreaming hopes that are not properly hopes, but only fancies. When a man has spent all his life in the study of a dead city—of its history and legends—he is apt to begin, bit by bit, to put faith in the most improbable of those legends. It is quite natural. At any rate, he showed you some odd things, I suppose."

"Cursedly odd!" said Captain Berkeley; and kicked again at the turf, with a resentful heel. "That was the worst of it. One can't laugh away some of the things I saw with my own eyes. They're there, I tell you," he went on, with a rising voice. "The man almost had me believing his mad tale! It all seems great rot now, when one can look back at it, sanely, and in the light of deliberate common-sense; but—he hypnotized me, somehow. The most utter nonsense sounded reasonable enough while he was telling it. But he's mad, quite mad!"

The countess smiled at him, shaking her head. "You think that, because you don't understand," said she. "I told the earl once that you English had no temperament, that you could not feel certain things to be true without demanding proof. You say that the marquis is mad, in self-defense, because he has troubled you a little, shaken your poise. You hate that, you English, more than anything else."

"Do you believe it all?" demanded Captain Berkeley; "do you? You're no dreaming recluse. You could shake me more than could twenty like the marquis. Do you believe those things?"

The countess shrugged her shoulders. "There are many strange things," she said, as the Marquis de Kersalec had said, before her. "Who knows where truth may not be? Aurélie believes many things at which you would laugh, but who would dream of calling her mad? Belief is a quality of the mind, my friend; it is not a matter of logic, or reason."

Captain Berkeley laughed, a tender, indulgent laugh, as one laughs at the quaint fancies of a child. "Yes," said he, "the marquise believes many odd things. That is because she is a Bretonne, I suppose. She believes that the dead come out of their graves, every year, to warm themselves about the fires that are lighted on St. John's Eve. And she believes that her kinswoman, Ahés, King Gradlon's daughter, was turned into a mermaid, when she

slipped from the horse into the sea, and that she rides on the waves down there, before a storm, to warn the fishermen. Oh, yes; she believes no end of the popular superstitions, but she is not mad, because—why, because she—she's a child, you know, in most ways. She was brought up on superstition. She has never seen the world, outside of her home and a convent. Oh, bless you, no, she is not mad, or anything like it. One would not have her more practical. One would not have her lose her faith in the fairy tales. She would not be the same, somehow."

"No," assented Varvara zu Ehrenstern; "she would have lost something more than belief. She would have lost a part of herself, a certain share of her exquisite loveliness. I hope she will be a child, always. Certainly, she will be until she falls in love with some one—and, even then, if she falls in love with the right one—the one to appreciate her, not to crush her."

"You seem quite to forget," said Captain Berkeley, "that the marquise is a married woman. You speak as if she were a girl—free to fall in love with any one she likes."

"Oh, Captain Berkeley," cried the countess, laughing, "is it, then, only the free who fall in love? I had thought differently. Is it only the free who—fall in love, captain?"

Captain Berkeley turned slightly red. "Why, as for that, countess," said he, "I must confess that I have known it to be sadly otherwise. Love will not be bid or bound. Love comes often when it should not, or when it is unwelcome. Still, I do not think of such love in connection with the Marquise de Kersalec. It seems not to belong to her. It seems—the very thought of it—somehow, to profane her. The marquise was made for happiness and contentment, countess; for all the lovely things in life, not for tragedy."

"Who knows?" said the countess again, in a musing, absent tone. "Oh, yes, yes; you are right! Such things are not for her world—passion and unhappiness and such—they should pass

her by. Indeed, I hope they may, for I know somewhat of them, captain, and they do not make for peace of soul. They age one."

Captain Berkeley lifted his grave face, and, for the moment, it showed haggard in the afternoon sun—as it were, from reminiscence. "Aye," said he, nodding, "they age one. Yet, you bear no scars from them, no scars that one may see. Fate has been good to you in one thing, at least."

"My scars are within, captain," she said. "They burn—at times—without showing."

Then, after a moment, she laughed, clasping her knee with both hands, and leaning back on the soft turf—laughed consumedly, as if greatly amused. "Tragedy, tragedy, monsieur!" she cried. "Here we sit in God's good, golden sunshine, on this beautiful day, prating of our griefs and our wounds; sighing like furnaces when we should be laughing for pure *joie de vivre*. Griefs!" She put on a child-like smile, in imitation of the Marquise de Kersalec, and turned wide eyes upon Captain Berkeley. "Me, I 'ave no griefs," she declared, sweetly. "I am al-ways 'appy, monsieur—al-ways 'appy. And you," she went on, in her own voice, "I don't believe you ever had a grief in your whole life. You don't show it. You're too well-groomed and prosperous-looking to have had griefs. You look as if you played cricket a little better than other people, or rowed better, or something like that, and as if that was all you cared for." And, with this surprising absurdity—for he looked nothing of the sort, save in being tanned and well made—she beamed pleasantly upon her companion, and fashioned a little boutonnière of purple heather for his jacket.

"That is quite true," said he, gravely; "I play better cricket than anybody I know. And, if that is not enough to fill a chap's life, I don't know what is. I say, but that smell of *goëmons* is rather fine, you know;" and he sniffed, delightedly.

But the Countess zu Ehrenstern held

up a very small handkerchief, and made a face. "It is horrible! If you like that, you must be a Breton at heart. They say that no one else can bear the odor."

Down at the foot of the cliffs, two hundred feet below, some peasant lads were collecting *goëmons*, the long, ribbonlike weed which the tide brings in from the deep sea, and leaves on the rocks. There was a great heap of it, drying there in the sun, and the wind bore up its pungent reek to the cliff's top.

"I like it," said Captain Berkeley; "I like all manner of sea smells, even the worst of the low tide ones that most people cannot bear. Do you know why the Bretons about here collect that stuff? You'll see heaps of it, all along the coast. They dry it in the sun, and burn it. Then, they send the ashes to the chemical works, where they are turned into iodine and bromides, and the like. It's a very useful industry, if you please."

"It is a very nasty one," declared the countess; "I've quarreled about it with Aurélie. She, too, loves the odor, I call it most indelicate of her."

A little, red-sailed fishing boat crept around from the Baie de Douarnenez, making for the Raz de Sein. Her sail flapped in the lazy breeze, and one of the men on board sang magnificently, in a high tenor voice, some interminable *chanson* of the coast. The voice came up to the top of the cliff, made very thin and faint and sweet by the distance, like a horn that is sounded far away.

"There's some one else who has no griefs," said Captain Berkeley, watching the tiny boat; "some one else with an attack of *joie de vivre*."

But the countess seemed, capriciously, to have turned serious again. "Ah, he's only pretending," said she, "like—like every one else. It's only the sunshine and the smooth sea, and, maybe, a good haul of fish, that make him happy, for the moment. He is only pretending to forget that the Raz de Sein is ahead of him, and must be passed, with all its ugly currents

and hidden rocks and such. He's only pretending to forget that he had a quarrel with his wife this morning, before he left home, and that the baby—the baby died a month ago."

"Well, then," insisted Captain Berkeley, "I say that he is jolly right to pretend. He's jolly right to take all the fun he can get, and to forget all that isn't—isn't fun. And, further," he went on, in a tone of complaint, "further, I should like to state that you are the most morose and depressing person I have met in a good many days, and I'm sorry I happened upon you. You're in a fair way to give me *papillons noirs*, as well as yourself."

"Ah, now, I mustn't do that, must I?" said she, laughing. "You will be avoiding me, after this, if I make you blue. Let us talk about something more cheerful. What nice things are you going to do when you leave here? I suppose the earl won't be able to keep you long in such a forsaken spot. Where are you going when you leave Château Kerval?"

"Leave—Château Kerval?" said Captain Berkeley, in a strange voice; and she could see a swift change pass over his face, as if the thought came to him with a shock; "leave—Château Kerval? Why, I don't believe—I'm afraid it hadn't occurred to me at all that I must be leaving before long. It has all been so fine here that I'd taken no thought of going away. Jove! I—I shall hate to go, you know."

He fell silent, frowning, and chafing his hands upon his knees, and, for a time, he quite forgot the presence of the countess, while his mind dwelt upon the waste which lay beyond these present days, and he considered what going away from Kerval must mean. It was quite true that the idea had never before occurred to him, and he faced it, at last, with a dismay which appalled him.

"Why, I might never see *her* again!" he cried, to a panic-stricken inner self; "I couldn't come back, anyhow, till the earl returns, a year from now. A year! Who knows what might

happen in a year, or in half of it? Not see *her* for a year? Good God, what could I be doing to make the time pass? A year!" And, from that, he fell to thinking how hopeless must be his state, both now and after that year—or after many years, save in one event upon which he would not allow himself to dwell; of how hopelessly beyond him she must always be, beyond even a hand's touch, an eye's caress, the littlest betrayal of how dear to him she was. She must never know, he said very fiercely to himself, never even suspect; and he gave a bitter laugh as he pictured her amazed contempt when she should discover that he had dared lift his eyes to her otherwise than as a friend.

But, in all his bitterness and utter absence of any hope, he shrank desperately from the thought of going away. "Just to be near her!" he cried, in his tense silence. "Just to see her, sometimes, to know that she is well, to be of a little service to her; maybe to touch her hand, once in a way, hear her voice, watch her eyes change and go soft, watch her smile—just to be near her, never letting her know what—what she must never know!

"A year!" he cried, aloud, gripping his hands savagely upon his knees. "A year? It is impossible! I can't! I tell you, I can't!"

"What can you not?" inquired Varvara zu Ehrenstern.

Captain Berkeley gave a quick start; he had quite forgotten that she was near. "I beg pardon!" he said, and forced a laugh, when he saw that she was watching him very curiously. "I beg pardon; I am subject to brief spells of insanity. Please don't mind me. I—was thinking about how it would seem to leave here. I find that I don't in the very least wish to go—not in the very least."

"No?" said she. Then, after a pause, she went on, "I wonder why; I wonder just why." Her eyes did not leave his, and it seemed to Captain Berkeley that their curiosity had become more serious, that they asked a

question of him deeper than, and beyond, her words. It seemed to him that a sort of excitement grew upon her—something which he did not follow or comprehend.

"I wonder just why," she said, again.

"Why," said Captain Berkeley, smiling into her eyes, "it would seem most easy of understanding. Should not a man be unwilling to leave the Pointe du Van while the Pointe du Van is graced by—is graced as it is graced nowadays?" And he made a little bow.

But the countess shook her head, frowning, for an instant, at his tone of banter. Then, she leaned toward him, eagerly. "Why?" she demanded again, and a flush spread upon her cheeks.

"There is that upon the Pointe du Van," said Captain Berkeley, unsmiling, "which I find it strangely hard to leave behind me. It holds one, somehow," he went on; "it makes one oddly weak and—foolish."

"It is not the sea?" she suggested.

"No, countess," said Captain Berkeley.

"Nor the heather, nor the rocks, nor the storms; nor these strange Bretons and their legends?" she asked.

"No, countess," said Captain Berkeley, again; "it is none of those things."

"Then," said she, still watching him, "then, it is some one who is here, upon the Pointe du Van, some one whom you—who holds you. Oh, Captain Berkeley, they say that you are a very brave man; they tell wonderful tales of your courage. Where is your bravery now, captain? If you—care about this—person who is upon the Pointe du Van, why don't you tell her so? What stands in your way? Why don't you take her with you, when you go? It may be," she said, and her voice dropped a little, as if she spoke to herself, "it may be that you could take her with you. It may be that she would come to care for you, if she thought you—you cared enough. It may be that she's just wavering between—safety and—peril. It may be that you could save her, if you're very strong and sure."

Captain Berkeley looked up, in swift alarm. It could not be that the countess knew, he said to himself; it could not be that any one knew. He had hidden it all too well for that, surely. He did not, in the least, understand what she meant by peril and safety, and by the possibility of his taking the woman he loved with him from the Pointe du Van. He was too much concerned, his mind was too full of the necessity for misleading her, if she had any little glimmer of the truth, to pay close attention to her words.

"Alas, countess!" said he, bowing again, "you would lure me to my undoing with false hopes, shipwreck me under a blue sky. Bravery? I've none of it. I'll not exchange a half-sweet misery for a certain grief, not I! Leave me my misery—since it is half-sweet."

He rose to his feet, laughing gently, and brushed the bits of heather and sand from his elbows. It was quite time to escape, he was saying to himself; the ground had become too dangerous.

"May I walk back to Kersalec with you?" he asked; "you must not sit here; the wind grows cold."

The countess, also, rose and there was a strange smile about her lips. She half lifted her hands, and dropped them again to her sides. "*Soit!*" said she, in the tone of one who accepts some decision; and the strange smile seemed to be fixed upon her lips. But, after a moment, she went on: "No, I will not go back yet. Leave me here for a while; I wish to be alone. The wind is not too cold."

She raised her eyes to his, and looked at him for quite a time. "I told you, an hour ago," she continued, "that your happening along would have no effect upon a problem which was vexing me—I am not so sure, now. I think you've settled the problem, Captain Berkeley."

The captain shook his head, with a puzzled frown. "I don't follow at all," said he; "you're beyond me. I don't follow."

"No," she agreed; "you don't fol-

low. Some day, you may; but, just now, you don't follow at all."

Then, when he had gone away, she sat down again, upon the short heather, and taking the little copper medallion of Notre Dame de St. They from the cord that had bound it to her wrist, she threw it over the cliff's edge, and watched it fall, winking in the sunlight, to the rocks, far below, and to the sucking waves.

"There goes a so-called immortal soul," said the Countess zu Ehrenstern, in Russian.

Then, for a moment, she looked back over the moor, to the receding figure of Captain Berkeley. "I am not quite sure," she continued, slowly; "but I think—I think you could have saved it, my friend."

XII

"THEES woman, monsieur," began the Marquise de Kersalec, choosing the very reddest rose in sight, "thees woman w'at you 'ave tell me abbout the othaire day, the woman you—love—will you not tell me more of 'er? I am so curious, me, jus' like a cat!"

She stuck the reddest rose in her hair over one ear, and turned her head experimentally back and forth, to make sure that the flower would stay. "You will see," she went on, "that I say jus' the woman you—love, not Varvara zu Ehrenstern. Of course, it is not Varvara, nevvaire!" And she treated herself to a little gurgie of laughter.

"What do you wish to know about her, madame?" asked Captain Berkeley.

The marquise made an open gesture with two very small hands. "Evverything," said she, with a fine moderation; "evverything! W'at 'she look like, an' 'ow she speak, an' 'ow she is so differen' from all othaire women—I mean," she amended, hastily, "I mean from mos' othaire women, that you should love 'er so. Tell me abbout 'er, monsieur!"

"What she looks like?" said Captain Berkeley, softly, and there began to come into his voice a sort of thrill. "Why, madame, she is the loveliest thing that God has made. She is lovelier than those flowers, yonder, daintier and fresher and more exquisite! 'What does she look like?' Oh, madame, she is the most beautiful woman in Europe!"

The Marquise de Kersalec gave a little, low-voiced cry of protest. "Monsieur, monsieur!" said she. "The mos' beautiful woman in Europe? Oh, monsieur, is she more beautiful than the Princess Adela? Is she more beautiful than Amélie de Colonne? Is she as beautiful as Isabeau de Monsigny? Ah, she cannot be! Why, Varvara is lovely, but— Ah, no, no, monsieur, I did not mean to say Varvara; of course, it is not Varvara. I will not say 'er name aggain—jus' 'the woman you—love.'"

"I have seen all those women you mention, madame," said Captain Berkeley, "and Isabeau de Monsigny is one of the best friends I have; but—I think the woman I—love is the most beautiful of them all."

"That is bicause you love 'er, monsieur," said the marquise, very softly.

"And how does she speak?" said he, and the low thrill in his voice deepened. "She speaks as no one else I have ever known speaks; as one would say that a great singer should speak—and as a few great singers do; so that one plays little tricks upon her to make her, for a moment, gay or sad or even angry, or, best of all, tender—just to hear her wonderful voice change with her mood. Every word she speaks is a caress, madame, though she doesn't know it. Every golden tone of hers haunts one afterward, in one's dreams. Ah, how does she speak? Oh, madame, there are many women who can move a man to passion, for that is the law of life, but there is no selfishness in the love *She* draws. One would give one's life to her service, gladly; kissing her feet that one was permitted to give it,

but asking nothing in return—asking nothing—nothing.” His voice went lower and slower, and trailed off into silence, and he sat, leaning forward slightly, clasping and unclasping his locked hands, and staring across the garden to the barren moors.

But the Marquise de Kersalec leaned back in her seat, with a little sigh, and pressed her hands over her eyes. Her cheeks were very much flushed. “I—I ’ave nevvaire ’eard any one speak—like that,” she said, uncertainly, “nevvaire biffore. Oh, monsieur, ’ow you mus’ love ’er, thees woman! ’ow you mus’ love ’er!”

“Very greatly, madame,” said he, not looking toward her; “very greatly—but I ask nothing from her.”

“Not—not ’er love, monsieur?” she asked.

“That least of all, madame,” said Captain Berkeley. “I may not ask for her love.”

She gave a soft, inarticulate cry of pity and distress. “Ah, monsieur,” she murmured, “it is so bad as that? You may not ask for ’er love, monsieur? I am—so sorry! Does she love some one else, monsieur?”

“I do not know, madame,” said Captain Berkeley; “I have thought that she does, and I have thought otherwise; I do not know. But I may not ask for her love.”

And then, because he had been for a long time holding himself very hard in hand, and because the strain was very great, a sudden fit of nervous shivering came over him, and he set his teeth, and gripped his hands, to force it back. “Oh, madame, madame!” he cried; “will you not speak of something else? Will you force me to speak of her, always?”

“But w’at, monsieur,” she persisted, as if she had not heard him; “w’at if evverything w’ich stan’ between you—evverything w’ich keep’ you from telling ’er that you—you love ’er, should go away? Strange things ’appen; evvery day they ’appen. W’at if thees trouble should—should pass? W’at then, monsieur?”

Captain Berkeley looked up, with

quick, wide eyes, and an eager laugh broke from him. “What then?” he cried, in a voice that shook; “what then, madame? Why, then, I’d go to her, and I’d hold out my arms that have starved for her, and I’d say, ‘Oh, my queen! Come away from all this loneliness and cold and sorrow that have been over us so long; come away with me, and let me make you happy. There’s a great, broad world out yonder that you don’t know about. It’s full of light and music and gaiety. Come out there with me, and let me take you to the places I know so well. I want to see how much nicer they are with you beside me. Come!’ Yes,” he went on, nodding his head, excitedly, “yes, that is what I’d say to her; and she—she’d come,” he said, with a gulp. “Let’s pretend that she’d come. And we’d go everywhere together—Nice and Cannes and Bordighera, in the Winter; and Cairo and Algiers and Italy, in the Spring; the lakes and Homburg and Baden and Deauville and Scheveningen, in the Summer, with a month or two, now and then, in Paris and London and Vienna and Petersburg—all that just to begin with, for, when we had tired of Europe, we’d go East, and I’d show her a lot of queer places where the trippers don’t go, and she’d want to buy tons of lamps and bric-à-brac and silk things, to take home with her—just as if she couldn’t get them all quite as good on the rue de Rivoli. And, when we’d tired of even the East, and were sick of steamers, and of bribing customs officers, and of packing boxes, then we’d settle down in some jolly little place—I know where!—just the two of us, and rest. And I’d spend the time telling her just how beautiful she was; and she—oh, she’d be very polite, and tell me that I was as nice as she was beautiful, and—and we’d live happily ever after, just like the people in the story-books,” he concluded, triumphantly. “That’s what we’d do!”

The Marquise de Kersalec clasped her small hands together, with a little murmur of delight. “Oh, monsieur!”

she said, helplessly—as if there were no words for the splendor of his picture; “oh, monsieur! But the las’ part would be the bes’,” she declared, after a pause. “She would love that part mos’, monsieur. One mus’ grow ennuyé of cities, an’ of traveling, an’ all such gay theengs. She would love to go to the little place, allone with you, an’ be tol’—an’ be tol’ that she was—beautiful, always.”

Then, for a while, she was silent. “I wondaire—” she said, at last.

“What do you wonder, madame?”

But the marquise shook her head, with a laugh which seemed, somehow, to have no mirth in it. “I did not mean to speak aloud,” said she. “I was wondering if, after all, it might be some one else, and not Varvara, at all—some one I nevvaire ’ave seen. Ah, no, no, it mus’ be Varvara! of course, it is Varvara! Forgive me, monsieur! I was only theenking. You are not suppose’ to ’ear. Monsieur,” after another pause, “jus’ one theeng, monsieur. Does—does she know, thees woman? Does she know that you love ’er so?”

“No, madame!” said Captain Berkeley; “no, thank God! It would make her unhappy, and I would die rather than make her unhappy.”

“You are a—ver’ brave man, monsieur,” said the Marquise de Kersalec, as she had said to him once before, “braver than any man I know. But, per’aps, you are cruel, al-so. Theenk ’ow proud ’she would be, ’ow proud any woman mus’ be, to be lov’ so by you. Theenk ’ow ’appy it would make ’er, even—even if there is something w’ich mus’ keep ’er from you. Monsieur, you are so brave! Are you not a little cruel al-so?”

“Oh, madame, madame!” cried Captain Berkeley.

XIII

“Is this the morning,” demanded the Earl of Strope, over his fourth cup of coffee, “is this the morning on which we go to see the grottoes in the Baie des Trépassés?”

“It is,” said Captain Berkeley; “and, if we’re going to get into the grottoes at all, we’d best look sharp about it, too. It is half an hour past low water, now. By the time we pick up the people at Kersalec, and get down to the rocks, across the bay, we shall have to race with the tide.”

“Plenty of time,” said the earl, comfortably; “when you’re come to eighty year, you won’t hurry your breakfast for anybody’s grottoes—or anybody’s tides, either. I’ve only to put on some hobnailed boots, and I’m quite ready.”

“Hobnailed boots are no good over wet rocks,” objected Captain Berkeley. “You’ll slip, and break your neck, probably. I’ve put on tennis shoes, with rubber soles, and I told the marquise and the countess, yesterday, to wear rubber soles.”

The earl growled. “This is evidently a garden-party,” said he, as he tramped out of the breakfast-room to find the hobnailed boots; “I shall bring my tennis bat. Will there be a tea tent?”

It was a hot, still morning—in that land where heat and stillness are almost unknown. There was a pearly mist, which hung over the moors, and cloaked the Pointe du Raz, across the bay. The sea crept in out of it, green, sluggish and oily, and broke, with a deadened splash, sucking along the rocks, as an ebb-tide sucks along the piles of a wharf. There were gulls that wailed, near at hand, but lost in the whiteness, and, somewhere over in Troguer, a cow lowed unhappily.

The earl, as they crossed the moor toward Kersalec, drew his shoulders together, with a movement of distaste. “I don’t like this sort of a day,” said he; “it gets on my nerves; it makes me uncomfortable. It is the sort of day on which unpleasant things happen. I dare say, it sounds a bit absurd from a North Countryman, who is, of necessity, brought up on mists, but I’m genuinely afraid of them—hot mists, in particular. They’re uncanny.”

Captain Berkeley laughed.

But the earl shook his white head, and would not be amused. "Is the marquis going with us?" he asked, after a pause.

"Yes," said Captain Berkeley, with no appearance of enthusiasm; "yes, I saw him, for a few moments, yesterday, and he said he would go. Of course, he may have forgotten about it before this time; I rather hope he has. He shoves his troubles rather too much down one's throat—just as if one had no troubles of one's own. Melancholy is all very well, but I don't like to see it forced upon the public—anyhow, not when I'm the public. His temper has gone off, of late, too; he's very snappy, at times. Yesterday, something trivial annoyed him, and he turned on his wife about it. He didn't say much, but he was very nasty. I had to look away, and recite poetry, to keep my hands off him. It would have given me a pleasure that I should always have remembered to beat his face in."

The earl raised his eyebrows. "I am a bit surprised at that," said he. "De Kersalec must have been in a very bad way, or he would never have spoken sharply to his wife—and, above all, before a third person. With all his peculiarities, he has beautiful manners; that is the blood telling. He has more of the old-fashioned courtesy than any man I know. Oh, yes; he must have been very much annoyed. I dare say, he felt more cut up about it afterward than one would think. De Kersalec is a very curious man," the earl went on, reflectively; "I have said so to you, many times before. He has altogether too many nerves, and too little body to put them in. I suppose those of us who are more normal have no idea of what a nervous temperament suffers, and of what a state of frenzy a man can be thrown into, all in a moment, if his nerves get a bit out of hand. I have seen people of the nervous temperament run amuck, and do the most extraordinary things. I've a sort of notion that de Kersalec is nearly at the end of his tether, physically; he

works too hard, and lets his dreams prey too heavily upon his mind. He looked shocking bad when I saw him last; he couldn't keep his hands still, or his eyes, either. I should have said he had something on his mind—something new. I dare say, it was merely overwork and under-play, though. He won't live long."

"I don't think he has been working so very hard of late," objected Captain Berkeley; "he seems to go mooning about the château, or over the moors the greater part of the time. He is with Varvara zu Ehrenstern a great deal. He fancies that she's a kindred soul, or something of the sort, I think. They spend their time talking about dead people and masses and things. He seems to be very fond of her."

The old gentleman looked up, swiftly. "You don't mean—" said he, and halted, working his great eyebrows up and down, thoughtfully. And, as they tramped along over the spongy heather, he held a curious, side-long eye upon his companion, as if something puzzled him. He had done Captain Berkeley the injustice of believing that his tone of indifference was assumed.

"I think I should not allow that, if I were you," he ventured, by way of experiment. "Varvara zu Ehrenstern was to have been your especial property, as it were. I had some idea of making a match between you."

"So has the Marquise de Kersalec, I believe," said Captain Berkeley; "between you and the marquise, there would seem to be small hope of escape for the poor woman."

The earl shook his white head again, but he asked no questions, for he had a great dislike of seeming curious.

So, they came past the tiny chapel of St. They, and across the deep cut in the moor, which lies beyond, and, finally, to Kersalec, where the marquis and marquise and the Countess zu Ehrenstern were waiting for them, on the landward terrace.

"*Enfin!*" cried the marquise. "We thought you were nevvairé coming;

we 'ave wait' hours!" she affirmed, indignantly, illustrating the length of the hours with her two arms.

"The earl was greedy," said Captain Berkeley; "he wouldn't leave his breakfast. Also, he had to put on those beautiful boots. Dear me! hadn't you noticed them? We thought it rather a shame that they should be standing idle about the castle, when they might as well be evoking your admiration. We put them on," said he, in the tone of a street showman, "to give you a treat. 'Please do not feed or annoy the gentleman in them; he is part of the exhibition. Passing a bit farther along, we see——'"

"'Passing a bit farther along,' you'll see a double murder committed, very shortly," interrupted the Earl of Strope, "if you two flippant young persons don't let my boots alone. You have no respect for white hairs. But, I say, we must be getting on, you know, if we're to see those grottoes. It will take us half an hour, at least, from here, and the tide is rising, now."

They went down, through the garden, and out of the south gate in the wall, to the little foot-path which veined the broad shoulder of the cliffs, and leads to the sands of the Baie des Trépassés.

On the beach, there were great heaps of *goëmons*, piled up, five feet by ten or twelve, to dry—a-reek with deep-sea odors and decay. The earl and Varvara passed them to windward, but Captain Berkeley sniffed with an appreciation that won him cries of applause from the marquise. There were little fisher boys—*gosses*, brown and sturdy; built for wind and sea, like their fathers' boats—bathing from the sands, but they ventured no more than waist-deep into that fair, bland place of death.

The waves came in, long as the little bay was wide, straight and oily and unbroken, innocent to the eye, as the *gosses* who splashed among them. One would not have said that wrecks came here, in dozens, scores, hundreds; and dead men, too—bits of

them. Only, in that hot, white stillness, things whispered, out of sight in the mist, and passed, and whispered again. And there was a choked ringing of bells, very faint and deep-buried—or it might have been only the sucking of lazy water, among the rocks beyond.

But the Marquise de Kersalec caught at the hand of Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and drew a little nearer her side, hurrying her steps; and the old Earl of Strope brought his great shoulders together again, uncomfortably, and turned his iron face to the hidden sea, scowling. Even Captain Berkeley started and caught his breath, when a gull, wheeling unseen over their heads, wailed aloud, and the two women screamed in echo. The place was full of an intangible horror.

Once across the beach and among the rocks, with the cliffs of the Pointe du Raz looming over them, the marquis took the lead, since, of necessity, he best of them all, knew the route; and the others followed, two and two, Varvara zu Ehrenstern beside Captain Berkeley, and the marquise with the old earl.

"We're an hour later than we should be," said Captain Berkeley, uneasily; "the tide is already among the rocks. We sha'n't be able to come back by the shore; we'll have to mount the cliff, over the grottoes."

"That will not be difficult, monsieur," said the marquis, across his shoulder; "there is one place where we can mount with ease. And, even if the tide is up to the mouth of the grottoes, it means only a little leaping from rock to rock, to reach the cliff, dry-shod. There is no danger; I have been here at higher water."

They reached the caverns, after half an hour's clambering among weed-hung boulders, and, at the last, over rocks where the tide ran and lapped. And they went in upon the white sand floors, and sat down to rest.

The grottoes were not large, or in any way extraordinary—mere hollows gouged in the granite wall by a resistless sea. At low water, they were

dry, if the sea was smooth; but, at high tide, the sea rose nearly to their roofs. There was sand underfoot, white as mountain snow, and pebbles of flint and granite and crystal, polished as if by hand. On the walls, there clung little black mussels, millions of them, covering the rock.

The Earl of Strope, crouching near the mouth of the cavern, took a handful of the polished pebbles, and tossed them, one by one, out into the rising water, scowling moodily after them as they fell, and taking no part in the conversation of the other four people.

"W'at is the matter, Monsieur de Strope?" inquired the marquise, gently. "You 'ave the air to be so *triste*. Is it—is it about the boots? Me, I like them—truly! They are such nice boots, an' *convenable*, but yes! We did not mean w'at we said; it was only—fun. Is it about the boots, monsieur?"

"It is this beastly mist!" said the earl; "I am afraid of it, and I shall be afraid of it so long as it lasts. It's not canny. I am always afraid of something happening in a mist. How do we know," he demanded, irritably, "what is going on, out yonder? I hear the most absurd noises. I fancy I'm getting into my dotage."

"Souls are wandering out yonder, monsieur," said the Marquis de Kersalec, and the marquise and Varvara zu Ehrenstern crossed themselves; "souls of drowned men who died unshriven, and may not enter paradise—and souls of men out of the city down there, who died for their sins, or the sins of others. The mist is full of them; we are in a place of death, monsieur. Only, to-day, they do no more than whisper and moan, the souls that may not rest; in time of storm they shriek."

"Jean, Jean!" cried the Marquise de Kersalec, and dropped her face into her hands, with a nervous sob. "Do not talk so!" she went on, in French; "you—frighten me. This place is horrible! Let us go away."

The marquis turned on her, with angry irritation. "Do not be absurd!" said he; "you are too old to

act like a child." But, looking up, he caught a hard gleam from the Earl of Strope's eye, and his face flushed. "A thousand pardons, Aurélie," he pleaded; "I did not mean to be rude. I ask the pardon of all. I was impatient."

A wave slid over the crest of the boulder that lay before the cavern's mouth, and ran up the sandy floor a little way, until it touched one of the earl's hobnailed boots. The earl rose to his feet, and looked out. He was frowning when he turned backward. "We had best be going, at once," said he; "the lower rocks outside are already covered, and we have a rod or two to go before reaching the point where we mount the cliff."

The Marquis de Kersalec stood beside the old man, and, when he saw the submerged rocks, made an exclamation of concern. "The water rises faster than I had thought," said he; "I should have watched. Yes, we must go at once; the rocks are covered with seaweed, and they will be slippery."

The party made their way, very carefully, out upon the greater boulders, springing from one to another, at the risk of slipping on the wet seaweed. With the mounting sea, a heavier swell bore into the bay, and waves, oily still and smooth, but a foot in height, ran swift and deep among the rocks. Here and there was a space where no great boulders stood, safe above the flood, and, at these spaces, the five people were forced to make a swift dash across the dripping lower rocks, between waves. Once, there was even a pool to ford, across which the women must be carried. Captain Berkeley had been at the marquise's side and, when he saw what had to be done, halted suddenly, with an odd stricture at the heart. But, in the very moment while he stood forcing his arms to steadiness, and his face to indifference, the old earl turned, and, slipping his left arm about the woman's waist, lifted her across to safety, as one might lift a doll. So they came, little by little,

with many narrow escapes from a fall or a wetting, near to the foot of the cliff, where a sort of natural stairway led up to the sheep path above. There remained no more than three or four yards between the great, flat boulder—dry as yet—upon which they stood, precariously, and the ledge which began the stairway. Separating the two was a round boss of rock, weed-covered, topping the water's surface between waves, but hidden when a wave passed over. Around this rock, the tide raced, thigh-deep and strong.

Captain Berkeley and the marquis crossed to the further ledge, and stood, a little in the water, to catch the two women, as they should jump from the middle rock. The earl remained behind, to help them from the boulder down on the smaller rock.

Had they crossed, as arranged, one at a time, they would probably have come to no harm, but being, by this time, a little frightened and much confused, they left the boulder—despite the efforts of Lord Strobe—together, steadying each other with their arms, and stood poised upon the lower rock.

What came next happened so swiftly that no one of the five could have told quite how it occurred. Waiting upon the low, weed-hung rock for the moment to spring, the two women must have paused too long, for a wave came—a tenth wave, swift and strong and knee-high—and swept their feet from under them.

To the earl, gathering himself for a plunge to the rescue, the maligned hobnails proved, at the critical moment, faithless. His feet slipped upon the smooth granite, and he rolled helplessly backward, and caught himself, half dry, half under water, using language by no means fit for ladies' ears.

But the other two men leaped forward, at the same moment. In Captain Berkeley's mind, schooled to sudden perils, calmest in crises, there rose, upon the instant, the old, familiar

thrill that waits upon danger—the gladness in the face of death. No paralysis of hand and brain was here, no palsy of horror that the woman he loved was being drowned before his eyes. He almost laughed as he took the water.

Thinking upon it afterward, he realized that Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and her equal peril, never once entered his mind. He leaped as straight and as unhesitatingly toward the Marquise de Kersalec as if he had been thrown there. He caught her as she was being whirled past him, waist-high—caught her when her head was six inches from the rock it must have struck in an instant more. And, in the ebb of the wave which had swept her off her feet, he stood, dripping, but firm as a tree; and the Marquise de Kersalec lay in his arms, upon his breast, her face against his cheek, her black, wet hair across his lips.

Through the great swell of the next wave, he stood fixed, holding the marquise in his arms, and staring across the submerged rock into the eyes of the marquis, who also stood strong for the instant, even in his muscular weakness—with that strange power which weak men draw from their teeming nerves in a crisis—holding against his breast the senseless form of Varvara zu Ehrenstern.

And in Captain Berkeley's mind, above the whirl and confusion of action, above the horror of peril and the joy of relief, above everything else in the world, something beat and rang—nay, shouted—till his head throbbed with it. For, when the wave had torn her feet from under her, and she had felt herself going down, she had called his name—"Robert!"

XIV

DURING the evening of this same day, the Marquise de Kersalec sent one of the footmen to her husband's study, to ask if she might see him for a few moments, relative to a little dinner-party that they were giving the next

day, to the Earl of Strobe and Captain Berkeley. She had not seen him since their return from the grottoes, in the morning. Indeed, she had been shut up all the day in her own rooms, nursing a headache, denying herself even to Varvara zu Ehrenstern, from motives too vague and unformed for her own understanding. She had felt that she must have a long time, quite alone and undisturbed, in which to face the new things that had come to her—or the familiar things suddenly unmasked, with true, strange features. But, when she was alone, she found herself curiously unwilling to face them, and she pushed them all from her, with closed eyes and frightened hands, not daring to learn what they might be.

Only, when she sat reading her book, or stood looking out of a window over the moor, the book or the heathered moor would, all at once, darken away from her sight, as a magic-lantern picture darkens away from the screen it is thrown on; and she would hear the rush and suck of water, and feel the strong, sure arms of Captain Berkeley holding her close against him—feel his heart beating fast—see his eyes. And, at these moments, the marquise's breath would catch, all at once, and a sudden fit of trembling would come over her, from head to foot.

The servant whom she had sent to her husband did not return, and, after she had waited a few moments, and had twice rung her bell, she herself went down the stairs, rather impatiently, and made her way, through the corridors and the darkened suites of state apartments, to the marquis's rooms.

The outer door stood slightly ajar, but she knocked at it, before entering, and called out her name. It seemed to her that she caught the sound of hurried footsteps from within, but of this she was not at all certain. She knocked again; then, hearing no answer, stepped inside, and went through the little waiting-room, and parted the hangings of the farther doorway.

The marquis sat by his great work-

ing-table. His back was to the light, and he supported his head with one hand.

"Ah," said the marquise, "you are here, then? I sent to ask you if you would be so good as to come to me, for a moment, but, for some reason, the servant did not return. Then, I knocked at your door, twice. I suppose you did not hear. I wished to see you about that dinner to-morrow. The Count and Countess de Paignard are in Douarnenez, I hear. I wanted to know if you thought it would be worth while to ask them to meet the Earl of Strobe."

The marquis moved his head, impatiently, upon his hand. "Do as you like," he answered, wearily; "it is of no consequence to me. I cannot think of anything but that terrible affair of this morning. It has completely unstrung me." Indeed, he looked quite ill and very nervous. The shock, combined with his unusual bodily exertion, had been a very great strain upon him.

"Oh, I should not feel so about it," said she; "it is all safely over now, and no one is the worse for it. I am not sure that it wasn't rather fun. You were admirably quick, you and—and Captain Berkeley."

"Ah, Captain Berkeley!" said the marquis, with an unpleasant emphasis; "is there not a little too much of Captain Berkeley? His unhesitating choice of yourself for rescue, rather than the Countess zu Ehrenstern, in spite of the fact that your husband might, naturally enough, be considered your proper protector, was—flattering, most flattering!"

"I did not observe," returned the Marquise de Kersalec, looking steadily into the man's eyes, "any tendency on the part of my husband to dispute Captain Berkeley's privilege, at the moment. I do not remember any feverish struggle on his part to save me from the death I should certainly have met, but for Captain Berkeley."

The marquis's pale face suddenly flushed crimson.

"Mind," she went on, "I am not

attempting to reproach you, or anything like that. I am merely replying to your remark about Captain Berkeley, to whom I owe my life. Your rescue of Varvara was splendid, splendid! Still, now that you have opened the discussion, I should think it would have been easier for you to save me. I am much smaller and lighter than Varvara; I'm rather little, and Varvara is a heavy woman, though she does not look it. It must have been hard work for you—you are not strong." And, for the first time, she looked at him with a touch of that half-contempt which a woman feels for a weak man.

"It was quite natural," said the marquis, with an assumption of dignity. "I saw that Captain Berkeley meant to go to your aid, and, moreover, I was much nearer to the countess than to you—much nearer!"

"Ah?" she questioned. "I had thought it quite otherwise. Let me see! I fell to the right of the rock. That would have brought me nearly in front of you, would it not? You must have crossed before me to reach Varvara. Ah, well, it doesn't in the least matter, as I said before; we are all safe, now. It struck me as rather curious; that was all."

She had been half-leaning, half-sitting, upon the arm of a great, oaken chair that stood across the table from the marquis, and her skirt brushed against something that hung over the chair's arm, to the floor. She stooped to pick up this, and raised it a little way into the air. It was a small, white silk wrap, or shawl, which Varvara zu Ehrenstern was in the habit of wearing about her neck and shoulders, when the weather was cool or damp.

The marquis straightened suddenly in his chair, with a muttered exclamation, when he saw the piece of silk in his wife's hand, and, at the same moment, there came, from the shadows at the farther end of the long room, where the little Roman lamps winked red, something which might have been a stir of draperies, and a quickly caught breath.

The Marquise de Kersalec looked up swiftly from the shawl to meet her husband's eyes, and down again to the thing in her hand, and she half turned toward the farther end of the room. Then, she dropped the shawl again, over the arm of the chair.

"Some one of the servants must have brought this in here, by mistake," she said, quietly; "I think it belongs to Varvara. You might have it sent back to her." She turned away from the table toward the door. "I'll not bother you any longer," she went on. "If you do not care about the de Paignards, I shall not ask them for to-morrow."

"Don't forget about Varvara's shawl," she added, from the doorway. "I am going to her rooms, now, to see her. I shall tell her that it isn't lost."

XV

"THERE is no one on the terrace," said the Earl of Strobe, as he and Captain Berkeley came up through the garden at Kersalec. "They usually sit out there in the early evening, especially if it is fine. We cannot be too early, I should think; it is quite eight o'clock."

"Eight!" cried Captain Berkeley. "My word! I told you that we were asked for half-past eight."

"You did not," said the old gentleman; "you said eight."

"Eight-thirty!" declared Captain Berkeley, stubbornly; "you're losing your memory. Is it only eight now? We're half an hour too early."

They hesitated a moment, on the steps of the terrace, with half a mind to retreat to the moors for a while; but the door of the castle stood open, as it usually did, and so, though there was no servant about to announce them, they went inside and along the corridor, toward a comfortable drawing-room, where the marquise and Varvara zu Ehrenstern were accustomed to sit when the weather was bad.

"Yes, they are in there," said the

earl, presently; "I can hear their voices." Then, all at once, he halted, and Captain Berkeley, too, pulled himself up, and they stood still, looking at each other with inquiring eyes.

"Something of a row!" said Captain Berkeley, in a lowered tone; "the marquis is on the war-path again. I expect we'd best get out, for a time, before they discover that we have been here. It would be very embarrassing, for every one, if they knew we'd overheard them."

But the old earl laid a restraining hand on the other's shoulder, and listened, without shame. "Wait a bit," he growled, in what he considered a whisper; "wait a bit! I don't like de Kersalec's voice. He is going to pieces, very rapidly. He might do something nasty."

It was quite evident that, inside the drawing-room beyond, a quarrel was in progress, and that the quarrel was between the Marquis de Kersalec and his wife. The two men, out in the corridor, could hear the voices, though not the words—save now and then, when a voice was raised higher than common. It was evident, also, that the marquis was quite beside himself with rage, for his voice shook and broke and quavered, and, at times, rose almost to a woman's scream. But the voice of his wife was low and bitter and contemptuous, and she spoke seldom. It seemed as if the marquis, in his excitement, were walking rapidly about the room, and once, between two bursts of half-hysterical invective, there came a slight crash, as if he had run into a table or a cabinet, and knocked something to the floor.

Then, suddenly, there came a new voice, the Countess zu Ehrenstern's voice, raised to a terrified scream. "Ah, no; ah, no! Jean, Jean, be careful!"

The Earl of Strobe and Captain Berkeley gained the door of the room in two strides, and halted there a moment.

The Marquis de Kersalec stood with his back toward them, leaning forward, beside a table that occupied the centre of the room, under the great,

hanging chandelier of crystal. His wife stood just before him, facing him, with level eyes and a quiet smile, and, not far away, was the Countess zu Ehrenstern, her hands at her two cheeks. The man's voice was thick and almost inarticulate with anger, and he trembled from head to foot.

"I tell you," he cried, "you shall apologize to the countess for what you have said! You shall apologize. And you shall refuse again to see this *mar- cheur*, this *chevalier d'industrie*, Captain Berkeley, and this street-fair-strong-man, the Earl of Strobe. I am your husband and your master, and I command it. We are done with them! Do you hear? We are done with them!"

"Pardon me," said the woman, very quietly, and with steady eyes; "pardon me—you may be done with them; I am not. They are my friends, and I refuse to give them up to satisfy your petty spite and your silly jealousy."

Then, in a flash, and before any one in the room could make a move to stop him, the marquis raised the pair of white gloves which he held in his hand, and struck his wife across the face with them.

Varvara zu Ehrenstern screamed again, calling him by name, and catching at his arm. But the Earl of Strobe, pushing aside Captain Berkeley, who would have been ahead of him, sprang forward, with a snarl of rage, and caught the man by the collar of his coat.

"You'd strike a woman; would you?" he cried; "you damned black-guard! You'll never strike any one again." And, because he was furiously angry and careless of whether he killed the man or not, he shook him, lifting him free from the floor, as one might shake a rug, till the coat ripped and tore under his iron hands, and the man's head rolled and bobbed helplessly from side to side. He shook him, as clowns in a hippodrome shake and beat a dummy stuffed with rags, to make their audience laugh. Then, when he had done, he threw him, with

a final twist, over in a corner—a mere bundle of torn and disheveled clothes. And Varvara zu Ehrenstern cast herself upon the bundle, with a great, sobbing cry, for she believed that the man was dead.

But the marquis came, somehow, in part to his senses, and, pushing the woman from him, ran around the wall, crouching low, like a beast, his livid face turned back over his shoulder to the giant who stood in the middle of the room. And the face was twisted into a mask of terror and rage and pain, awful to see. So, holding to the wall, he reached the door into the corridor, and disappeared.

The earl turned back toward the marquise, but she had gone, straight as a homing bird, into the arms of Captain Berkeley, and was clinging there, sobbing and shaking, not from fear, for there was no fear in her, but from sheer anger at the insult she had suffered. But, after she had clung there for a space, and Captain Berkeley's arm had drawn about her shoulders, she looked up into his face, and her eyes met his. Then, somehow, little by little, all her anger and humiliation slipped from her like a garment, and was forgotten, and again—as it had done yesterday—her breath caught sharply, and a fit of trembling came over her, from head to foot.

When the earl turned to her, her eyes were fixed, very wide and bright and strange, upon Captain Berkeley's, and her lips were parted. She seemed not to breathe at all.

"Great God in heaven!" said the old man, under his breath; "great God in heaven!" He touched Captain Berkeley upon the arm. "Take her away," he commanded; "we will talk later of what must be done. Take her away!"

And, when the two had left the room, he sank down in a chair beside the onyx centre-table, and laid his arms out across it. His somber eyes were fixed upon the Countess zu Ehrenstern, who crouched still, beside the wall where Jean de Kersalec had fallen. "Well?" he asked, after a time; "well?"

But the Countess zu Ehrenstern made no reply; she stared at him, dully.

"I have been very blind," he said. "It was in my mind that certain things should happen, and, like many other men, I supposed they were sure to happen because I wished them. That was foolish as well as blind, and I am too old to be foolish."

He chafed his strong hands together, upon the polished table, and stared across at the woman. "I have been greatly puzzled," he went on, "for a fortnight past. I felt that things were happening, but I did not understand—because I was blind. It was only yesterday morning, in the Baie des Trépassés, that I saw." He leaned over the table, and his keen old eyes pierced the woman across the room. "Is it true, madame?" he demanded. "Is it true what I saw yesterday morning, in the Baie des Trépassés?"

The Countess zu Ehrenstern came and sat down by the table, opposite to him. Her head drooped; and there was no light in her eyes. "I don't know, quite," she answered, wearily. "It is true that the marquis loves me, and not his wife—if that is what you mean—and that I—love him. If you believe that he has wronged her in any direct act, you are mistaken. I suppose there is very little difference though, morally. It's much the same, isn't it?"

"It is much the same," he assented, nodding; "acts matter very little; it is the spirit behind them that counts. What is going to come of it all?" he demanded, after a short silence.

The countess lifted her arms from the table, and dropped them again, and the Russian bracelets which she wore clinked upon the polished onyx. "What fate wills," she said, in a tired voice; "I am past struggling. What fate wills. I tell you, I am past struggling," she repeated, looking up at him, with bitter, resentful eyes, as if she felt the condemnation he had not spoken. "I love him. No one ever loved him before. No one ever understood him, knew how great he is, and how earnest, and how unselfish.

What has *she* ever done for him but sit at his table, and drive in his carriage? How much has *she* ever appreciated or helped him? I could help him. I have helped him more in a month than she has helped him in four years. I tell you, I love him. What is law beside a great love?"

"What is any love beside the law?" asked the Earl of Strope. "She is—she was your friend," said he; "she trusted you; you were here as her guest."

"I don't care," cried the woman, fiercely; "I tell you, I love him! Do you fancy I haven't thought of all those things? Do you imagine I have not fought and struggled and lost, and fought again? Do you think I am glad to betray such a woman as Aurélie de Kersalec? She is the loveliest thing in God's world, and yet—I cannot stop."

The old man watched her, with puzzled, anxious eyes. "I had thought," said he, "I had hoped that it would be Robert Berkeley; that you would fancy him. At first, it seemed so, but, somehow, it did not seem to go on. I wonder why."

The woman shook her head, and her eyes were as puzzled as his own. "I don't know," said she. "At one time, I thought so, too. Perhaps, if he had really cared—I don't know. Only the other day, he might have changed it all, I think. I had been making a hard fight, and I was ready for—anything. Somehow, we never quite got on together. Somehow, we always just missed it. I don't know how, or why. I practically told him, once, that he might kiss me. I never knew why he didn't do it. Perhaps, even then, he was in love with Aurélie, though I never suspected it till to-night. Did you see their faces?"

"Yes," said the earl; "yes, I saw."

Then, for a time, they sat without speaking. The countess stared down upon the polished surface of the onyx table, in which the lights were mirrored, and twisted, absently, about her finger, the sapphire ring engraved with the royal arms.

"I wonder," said she, at last, "I wonder if you know what it is, sir, to love some one very greatly, so that everything else loses proportion, and seems trivial—all other things, such as honor and duty and friendship and the world's voice."

The earl shook his head, meditatively. "No," said he, "I expect not. No, I am an old man. I expect I have forgotten. The blood goes colder at eighty year."

The Countess zu Ehrenstern turned and fingered her sapphire ring, bending her head over it. "I loved a man once before," she said, softly; "it was not Karl zu Ehrenstern, it was a king."

"Ah!" said the earl, with emphasis.

"I very nearly ran away with him," she went on, still looking down at the sapphire ring. "He was not happy at court. He was very sick of being a king, and I—loved him. He was such a man as a woman might love. So, I very nearly ran away with him."

"Yes," said the Earl of Strope; "yes, I know."

The countess looked up at him, for an instant, with a faint, whimsical smile. "You knew when you first saw my ring, did you not?" she inquired. "You frightened me, somewhat, for I did not wish the people here to know."

"Will you tell me," asked the old gentleman, "just by way of satisfying my curiosity, why you did not run away with Ludwig, why he finally stopped at home? It is a long time since—four years, I think—but I remember the gossip of the day."

"It was the Queen," said she, still smiling; "Ludwig discovered suddenly that the Queen was worth stopping at home for. She won him away from me, as I had won him away from her, before. Kings are fickle, my lord; it is their divine right."

The earl rose from his chair, sighing, and took a turn back and forth across the room. He halted beside the onyx table, and stood there, looking down upon its mottled face. "I have liked you," he said, at last, "from the first moment I saw you. I have liked you

more than all but a few of the many women I have known. I knew about the history of that sapphire ring, and, in spite of it, I was willing, even anxious, that you should marry Robert Berkeley, because I thought that you would make him a better wife than any pink-and-white girl. But I cannot stand idly by, and see you ruin Aurélie de Kersalec's life. She is your friend and my friend, and, as you have said, she is the loveliest thing in God's world. I will not have her world turned into ashes about her—not if I can prevent it."

The countess sank back in her chair, very wearily, and raised her eyes to his. "What would you have me do?" she asked.

"Leave Kersalec to-morrow," said the Earl of Strobe.

But she sat forward in her chair, with a sudden cry, and her hands gripped at the table's edge. "No!" she whispered, fiercely; "no! I won't give him up! I tell you, I won't give him up! Have I had such a happy life that I can throw away happiness? I love him, don't you understand? I love him more than you ever loved any one in all your long life. Oh, I know what you think of him. You think he is a weak, dreaming fool—half a man—mad, very likely. You called him a blackguard, a little while ago, and nearly killed him with your hands—well, he was a blackguard, for the moment. He is very nervous, and he lost control of himself. He *was* a blackguard, but I love him. Maybe, he is all the other things you think, but I love him. What if I should leave Kersalec to-morrow? What good would it do? Aurélie does not love him. She will never speak to him again, after his striking her. It would be an impossible state of affairs. And, besides, he would follow me."

"Not if you should refuse to allow him to follow you," said the earl; "not if you should definitely break off with him before leaving. I do not know what could be done. It may be that, with you out of his reach, they could be reconciled, but I do not know. At

any rate, you must not stay here. You must give him up, for her sake."

He took another turn back and forth across the room, frowning and working his great white eyebrows, and, after a time, he came again and stood beside her, laying one of his hands rather awkwardly upon her shoulder. "I wish it might be otherwise," said he, "for I cannot forget or overcome my great fondness for you. I should like to see you happy, and I think you have never been very happy. Some lives seem to be made up of bitterness and sacrifice, of cups taken away from their lips. But, if you believe that you could be happy in the path you wish to tread, you are very wrong. It would end in worse bitterness. I am an old man, countess, and I know that, after all, the sweetest things in life are one's dreams of what might have been. They are commonly said to be the saddest, but that is not true. They are the sweetest, for there is neither disappointment nor disillusionment in them. You must give up Jean de Kersalec, for his wife's sake, and you must leave the château, to-morrow."

The countess sat for a long time with bowed head, and fingers that stirred and played upon the table-top. Then, she looked up, and something had gone out of her face, leaving it drawn and blank and old.

"I shall do as you wish," she said; and there was no feeling of any sort in her tone. "I suppose you are right. Yes, of course, you are right; I shall do as you wish." She rose to her feet, and held out her hand to him—it was quite steady. "I think," said she, "I think if—if you do not mind, I would rather not say anything more about it—just now. It—is not easy to do, what I am doing. I think I will—say good night. I shall leave to-morrow. Good night, sir. Perhaps, I care—something about keeping your—friendship. Perhaps, that is why I do this. Good night, Lord Strobe. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, countess," said the Earl of Strobe. "I shall not see you again

here, I expect; but in Paris, or wherever you may be, I shall find you, and, if an old man's friendship is worth anything, mine is at your service, always. I hope that we shall see much of each other." He pressed her hand, very gently, and was tactful enough not to express any gratitude, or to say anything at all about the sacrifice she had made. Then, he went out of the room, and through the long corridor, to the terrace.

XVI

BUT Captain Berkeley and the marquise, leaving the room where Jean de Kersalec had suffered his punishment, went slowly out through the corridor, to the landward terrace, where the moon printed, black and sharp across the flagstones, a silhouette of the crenelated battlements above, and so, down the terrace steps, to the garden.

The marquise clung always to Captain Berkeley's arm, and, when they had come to the garden, and were standing in a sheltered corner, waist-high among the flowers, bathed in pallid moonlight, she moved about so that she faced him once more, holding to his shoulders with both hands, and her eyes—as they had been in the drawing-room—were fixed, wide and bright and strange, upon his eyes smoldering in the gloom above her, and her lips were parted. She seemed not to breathe at all.

Captain Berkeley's hands were clenched and shaking at his sides. Then, all at once, he gave a sudden, choked cry, and his arms went up behind her shoulders, holding her—crushing her against him.

"It was—*me*, monsieur?" she whispered, in a catching breath. "It was—*me*, all the time?"

"You?" cried Captain Berkeley; "you? Oh, you loveliest thing in God's great world, could it be any one else? It's always been you, always, since I was in the nursery, and used to see pictures of you in my fairy tales, since I used to go to sleep at night, and

dream about you, and cry in the morning, because you weren't there. I've dreamed of you ever since, when I slept, or when I sat alone by the fire, and shut my eyes, and saw you, and made believe you were real. I knew you'd come, some day! There's never been any other woman in the world! Ah, they babble about my loving other women, and so I've fancied I did. I've been a tragic ass over a half-dozen of them, but I knew they weren't real. I knew you'd come. I tell you, when I saw you, that first day, in the garden here, I could have screamed like a woman—or wept like one. I knew it was you. I knew it was the woman I'd been dreaming about, and pretending about, and loving, since I was in my cradle. *You?* I tell you, no one in the wide world ever loved anything as I've loved you, since that day in the garden. When that—that beast, that swine of the gutter, struck you in the face to-night, I saw red. I'd have killed him with my hands if the earl had not held me back. And I'll kill him yet, if there's any life left in him. Oh, sweetest, sweetest, I've nearly gone mad, sometimes, to think of you as his wife."

But it seemed as if all recollection of what had occurred in the drawing-room was gone from the marquise's mind. She almost laughed aloud, clinging still to his shoulders, and looking up into his face. "It was truly me, then?" she persisted. "It was me you 'ave mean', all the time, w'en you 'ave say 'ow you—'ow you love 'er? It was me you 'ave mean' w'en you talk' about taking 'er away weeth you—evveryw'ere?"

"Oh, loveliest!" he cried; "who else could it be?"

The marquise's head dropped upon his breast. Her black hair was across his face. "An' that was w'y you would not tell me 'oo it was," she whispered, her face hidden. "That was w'y you could nevvaire tell 'er that you love 'er, monsieur, monsieur!"

Then, all at once, she seemed to remember what had happened, and

she started up in Captain Berkeley's arms, with a quick, angry exclamation, and her hands clenched, and a flush came over her face. "'E struck me!" she cried; "'e struck me with 'is glove!" And she rubbed at the cheek which de Kersalec's glove had touched. "No one envvaire struck me biffore, in all my life," she said, with drawn lips. And she seemed to grow more angry with each moment that she thought of the humiliation which had been put upon her.

"Oh, he will pay for that, right enough," said Captain Berkeley. "I shall kill him for that—as I said before—unless the earl has already killed him."

"Kill—'im, monsieur?" she whispered, looking up into his face, wide-eyed, even in the midst of her anger; "kill 'im? You would not murder 'im?"

"Oh, no," said Captain Berkeley; "I shall not murder him. He will have something in his hands when he goes. It won't be murder—not properly. But I shall kill him, for all that. Why, God in heaven!" he cried; "do you think I could ever hold up my head again if there were a man walking about the earth who had struck you? Why—why—" stammered Captain Berkeley, "why, he *struck* you! Don't you realize it? The beast *struck* you!"

"An' then?" said the marquise, faintly; "an' then, monsieur, when you 'ave killed 'im?"

Captain Berkeley's arms drew closer. "Then," said he, looking into her eyes, "why, then, I shall pick you up, and take you away." And he gave a little, shaking laugh. "Did you think I was going to leave you here? I shall take you away with me to all those places we talked of, because I want to see how much nicer they are with you along. And we'll do all the things I said, we'll spend our lives doing them. Our lives? Oh, loveliest, our life! our life! We'll make it all come true, all that I've dreamed of, through those years. We'll live such a life, my queen! We'll forget

everything that's bitter and cold and unhappy. We'll forget that we've not been always together, that there was a gray life before the golden one. Oh, loveliest, loveliest!"

The marquise stirred in his arms, and he felt her breath coming fast. She laid her head against his shoulder, turning her face away, toward the moonlight. And she stood so for a long time, very quiet, not speaking.

"Forget?" she said, at last; "we should nevvaire forget, if you 'ad killed 'im. No, you mus' not kill 'im, monsieur. 'E would stan' between us, always. We should feel 'im there. We could nevvaire quite forget."

"But I tell you," cried Captain Berkeley, "I shouldn't murder the beast; I should kill him in fair fight. What more can a man do? My word, I'm honoring him! I'm paying him a compliment. I must kill him, somehow; what in the world do you want me to do—poison him?"

But she shook her head. "You mus' not kill 'im, monsieur," she said, again. "Even if you killed 'im in fair fight, it would be almos' murder, because you would be killing 'im to put 'im out of the way—to be rid of 'im so that—that we could—we could go away."

Captain Berkeley took her suddenly by the shoulders, and held her out from him at arm's length. He stared into her eyes, with head thrust forward, and she saw, in the moonlight, the veins standing out upon his forehead.

"What do you—mean?" he said, in a hoarse whisper. "What do you—mean? Do you mean that—you won't go? You say I must not kill him. Do you mean that you're going to stay here, that you're going on—after everything—just as if nothing had happened? Is that what you mean? Am I going to—lose you after all?" His whisper shook and wavered, and the hands with which he held her shoulders gripped her, trembling, till they hurt.

But the marquise tore her shoulders from his grip, and threw herself upon his breast again, holding his head between her palms, and sobbing hyster-

ically. "Ah, no; ah, no!" she cried, and her voice mounted with a note of terror in it. "Ah, no, monsieur, take me with you! Take me away with you! I should die 'ere, in this dreadful place. I should go mad. Take me away with you, monsieur. We billong together, us! We love each othaire. You mus' not leave me 'ere." Her voice broke, and she dropped her face once more upon his shoulder, sobbing.

Then, after a space, when she was calmer, she went on: "I will go with you, monsieur, if you wan' me. I will go with you anyw'ere—anyw'ere, an', if you leave me 'ere, I shall go mad, or kill myself. I will not let you kill—'im, biccuse you would not forget, an', some time, you would be sorry. You would feel as if you 'ad murdered 'im to put 'im out of the way. I will go away with you, an' leave 'im 'ere. It make' no difference w'at they will say, the people!" she cried; "I do not care, me. I am beyon' caring. Oh, monsieur, I can think of nothing but my love an'—you—of nothing but the life we shall 'ave together."

She shivered in his arms. "I suppose, I suppose I am ver' wicked. They will call me w'at—w'at I 'ave 'ear' them call othaire women. I suppose I shall lose my soul. Do you remember w'at you said that firs' day, monsieur? You said, that many people were willing to imperil their souls for relief from w'at 'ad biccume intolerable. Me, I 'ad been theenking 'ow intolerable my life 'ere 'ad biccume. All that day, I 'ad been theenking of it, so that you startled me. I remember that I said one mus' be ver' desperate to do that—to risk losing one's soul. I said one's soul was a ver' precious theeng. Oh, monsieur, I mus' be ver' desperate and ver' wicked, biccuse love seem' to me more precious than my soul. I can see nothing, feel nothing, bot love, monsieur. Am I so wicked? I 'ave not 'ad much love in my life. Evvery one 'as been kin' to me, bot no one 'as evvaire love' me till—till you. Ah, take me with you! Take me away, or I shall die, now that I know w'at love

might be. See! it is not so much, the sacrifice I make. Let them call me w'at they will! If it is a sin, I am beyon' caring. Oh, monsieur, love is greater than one's soul! Take me with you!"

Captain Berkeley put her gently out of his arms, holding her away when she would have clung to him; then, he left her side, and began to walk up and down one of the little paths, in the moonlight, with head bowed and hands smiting each other. And, after a time, he moved over across the garden to the seaward wall, and he laid his arms upon its top, and bent his head over them. He stood there, a long while. And the marquise, still and scarcely breathing among the flowers, watched him.

Then, at last, he stood upright, with a long breath and a shake of the shoulders. It seemed to the marquise that his square jaw was squarer than common, and she noticed that a crease had come between his brows.

He took her two hands in his, holding them against his breast, and looked down at her. "I love you more than anything in the world," said he, "more than a man ever loved any woman before; but I will not take you away with me while your husband is alive. Perhaps, it is because I love you so much that I will not let you soil yourself in people's eyes, that I will not let you commit a sin. It is a question of my sin or yours. If I kill de Kersalec, it is I who have the responsibility upon my soul. If you come to me while he is alive, the responsibility is yours. There is no other way. I will not let you do what you have said you would do. For the last time, loveliest, answer me. Our happiness hangs upon it. Will you let me fight your husband? Remember, the world calls it perfectly fair. Will you let me fight with him?"

The marquise began to tremble, very violently. She hid her face upon Captain Berkeley's breast, and he heard her breathing quicken to sobs, and, after a long time, slow again. When she raised her face, it was very white, but she smiled.

"No, monsieur," she said.

XVII

WHEN Captain Berkeley came downstairs the next morning, it was to the shriek of wind, and the roar of surf. He found the earl standing by the breakfast-room windows, holding a pair of binoculars at his eyes.

"There's a fishing-boat out near the Tévennec," said the old man; "it cannot possibly live in this storm. Listen to that!" A wave broke upon the rocks, two hundred feet below, with a crashing roar, and a sheet of spray, like a heavy downpour of rain, drenched the whole face of the castle. "What I cannot make out," went on the earl, in a perplexed tone, "is why the boat should be there at all, why it should ever have put out in such a sea. It is nothing but a little thing of one sail. Do you wish the glasses?"

Captain Berkeley took the binoculars, and trained them upon the bit of white that he could see only between the frequent gusts of rain which slanted down out of a torn sky. The Tévennec rock was a smother of white foam, and the long Pointe du Raz lay as if half-buried in snow. The sea was terrible.

"That is fine sailing, anyhow," said he. "The poor devils! They can't last long. Of course, attempting to land anywhere is quite out of the question. They must have been absolutely mad to go out. I suppose you have not a more powerful glass? We might see how many men are in the boat."

"Why, yes," said the earl, "there is a big marine glass in a corner of my study. We'll have it brought." He gave an order to a servant, who left the room, and presently returned, bringing a large telescoping glass, some four or five feet long when drawn out.

The earl arranged it across the top of two chairs, and drew it to the proper focus, sitting on one of the chairs; then, he swung the end till he found the little boat.

"Ah," said he, "that is much better. There is only one man in the boat. You are right, it is wonderful

sailing. I can't see his face. He is kneeling at the tiller, and he has the sheet made fast to— Good God!" The old man's hand shook upon the tube, and he turned a white, amazed face to the other man.

"Look!" said he, hoarsely; "look!"

Captain Berkeley drew the glass to the focus fit for his eye, and took one look. Then, he sprang up, and the two stood staring into each other's faces.

"To the stables, at once!" cried the earl, after a moment; "we must ride to Kersalec. It may be that something can be done, even now. No, that is out of the question. There is no other boat, and to embark, if there were one, would only mean death. Still, we must see the others. Look sharp!"

The wind outside, even in the sheltered stable yard, was something frightful. Once mounted and upon the open moor, it well-nigh tore the men bodily from their horses, but they lay flat upon the animals' backs, their faces low in the mane, and rode as if death were riding behind them, through the slant, salt rain of whirling spray, which the gale drove inland.

They dismounted at the lower gate, and ran up through the bedraggled garden—where broken hollyhocks flapped in the wind, and rose-petals whirled about their feet—to the deserted terrace, and into the castle.

In the corridor, a servant, staring at their white faces and spray-soaked coats, said that madame was in the drawing-room, warming herself before a fire, and that the Countess zu Ehrenstern had gone, he believed, up to the house-top, to watch the storm.

At the foot of the great stairway, the earl paused, and laid a hand upon Captain Berkeley's shoulder. "Go in to her, lad," said he. "Break it to her, as gently as you can, that he will not come back. It is not as if she had loved him. It will be a shock to her, but not a sorrow." He smiled down, whimsically, upon the younger man as he stood on the first step. "I mind an old hymn," he continued, "from

many years back. It said, 'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.' Go in to her. This thing means the dawn of life to you—and to her."

And then—for he had been there before, and knew the way—the earl went on up the stairs, and then up two more flights, till he came, at last, to the door that let him out upon the gale-swept house-top.

The Countess zu Ehrenstern was there, crouching behind the crenelated seaward parapet. She wore a long rain-coat that flapped in the terrible wind, and snapped behind her, like a whip, and her yellow hair had come partially down, so that it, also, streamed behind her, and snapped in the gale. She held a long telescoping glass, which rested upon the edge of the parapet, and pointed seaward, toward the Tévenec.

She looked up when the earl came near, but made no sign of surprise or of greeting. Her face was set and drawn and white, but it showed no feeling at all. It was as if she had passed beyond that.

The earl put his head down close beside hers, to make himself heard in the wind. "When did he go?" he asked, "and why? He cannot possibly come back alive. He must have been mad!"

The Countess zu Ehrenstern laid down the glass, and, for a moment, sank back into a corner of the parapet, so that she was out of the violence of the wind, and could speak without shouting. "I do not know when he went," said she, and her voice was quite as expressionless as her mask-like face. "I have not seen him this morning. Last night, after you left, I—I went to his study. He was there and—I told him what—what I promised you I would tell him."

She looked away, and, for an instant, her hands shook in her lap. "That is all I know," she said; "I saw the boat this morning, by accident, as, doubtless, you did. I went to the study, and he was not there. Everything was in confusion and— Have you looked with a powerful glass? He is in the

armor of his ancestor, King Gradlon. It may be that he is mad—I do not know, but I think he is going to the throne that awaits him—down yonder."

The Earl of Strobe bent his white head. "God rest his soul," said he, "that had little rest here. He was a man of dreams and sorrows—out of place in a workaday world. No one understood him, here—or loved him. Let us hope he will be at home there."

"I loved him," declared Varvara zu Ehrenstern, and she lifted tragic eyes; "you shall not say that no one loved him. I understood him, too. I wish I were with him, in that boat, yonder."

Then, after a space, she crept again to her place by the long marine glass, and the earl crouched beside her, pulling his binoculars from his pocket. So, they watched together, and the wind shrieked past their heads, and tore at their garments, and—even at that great height—sheets of spray cut their faces, from time to time, and blurred the lenses of their instruments.

"He is making for home," said the earl, after a time; "he is running for the Baie des Trépassés."

"Watch!" cried the woman, in a shaking voice.

The little boat came on before the storm, with incredible swiftness. At times, it would be almost out of sight in the trough of the sea. Again, it would poise for a moment, on a wave's crest, before plunging.

Then, very suddenly, as it drove onward, just outside that awful bay of the dead, it seemed, for the fraction of a second, to pause, to wheel half about. The two at watch, with their glasses, saw the man at the tiller loose everything, and stand upright in the stern, a strange, fantastic figure in his white armor—and, even as one looked, it was not there. The storm-swept sea was empty.

The glass rolled from the countess's hands, and she swayed forward, toward the weather-worn edge of the parapet. But the earl caught her in his strong arms, and set her very gently back, where she had been before, in the shel-

tered corner; and, after a long time, she opened her eyes, and looked at him. "It is all over," she said, dully.

"Yes," said the old man; "yes, it is all over. I think he is happier now. I wonder," he went on, frowning, "I wonder if he meant to do it. Of course, he must have."

"Oh, yes," said she, with a certain surprise in her tone; "yes, he meant to do it. Last night he—he said things which I—might have understood if I had not been so wrapped up in my own troubles. I might have saved him, perhaps, even if I had broken my word to you. Perhaps, it is better this way. Somehow, I never had much hope of winning any happiness from it all. Somehow, I was prepared for—for something of this sort." Then, for another long time, she sat quite silent, dry-eyed and still.

"What," asked the old earl, at last, "what will you do?"

But the countess shook her head, very wearily. "I don't know," she answered. "Somehow, I seem to care very little. I loved him. Somehow, it does not seem to make much difference what comes, now. I had thought—in case of anything like this—of a convent, but I have not the tempera-

ment for a religious. What shall I do? I suppose I shall just go on, you know. That is like most people. I suppose I shall just go on."

Down in the little drawing-room, the Marquise de Kersalec stood, white-faced, looking into Captain Berkeley's eyes. And, in her own eyes, there trembled, behind all the shock and horror and pain, a great passion of love, and of shamed, unwilling joy.

"It is—terrible, monsieur!" she said, in a hushed voice; "too terrible to say! There is no good to preten' that I 'ave love 'im, bot, *après tout*, 'e was my 'usban'. God res' 'is soul!"

And then, at something she saw in Captain Berkeley's eyes—shamed and unwilling there, as in her own—she began to tremble. And she covered her face with her two hands. "Ah, monsieur, monsieur," she cried, "not now, monsieur! Wait, wait! There is all a lifetime to come—all a lifetime of love an' evverything beautiful! Wait, monsieur!"

"Oh, madame," said Captain Berkeley, "I have waited five-and-thirty years. I can wait a little longer—but, loveliest of everything, the days are slow!"



WHAT HAPPENED

SHE pressed her ruby lips to his
 In one ecstatic kiss;
 They seemed at peace with all the world,
 Enrapt in holy bliss.
 But, with the osculation o'er,
 It was not hard to find
 That, though she took her lips away,
 The ruby stayed behind!



A DRAMATIC CRITIC

BARNES TORMER (*as Hamlet*)—There is something rotten in the state of Denmark.

VOICE FROM THE GALLERY—You're it, old man!

THE AWAKENING

By Madison Cawein

GOD made that night of pearl and ivory,
Perfect and holy as a holy thought
Born of perfection, dreams and ecstasy,
In love and silence wrought.
And she, who lay where, through the casement falling,
The moonlight clasped, with arms of vapory gold,
Her Danaë beauty, seemed to hear a calling
Deep in the garden old.

And then it seemed, through some strange sense, she heard
The roses softly speaking in the night—
Or was it but the nocturne of a bird
Haunting the white moonlight?
It seemed a fragrant whisper, vaguely roaming
From rose to rose, a language sweet that blushed,
Saying, "Who comes? Who is this swiftly coming,
With face so dim and hushed?"

"And now, and now we hear a wild heart beating—
Whose heart is this that beats among our blooms?
Whose every pulse in rapture keeps repeating
Wild words like wild perfumes?"
And then it ceased; and then she heard a sigh,
As if a lily syllabled sweet scent—
Or was it but the wind that silverly
Touched some stringed instrument?

And then, again, a rumor she detected
Among the roses; words of musk and myrrh,
Saying, "He comes! the one she hath expected,
Who long hath sought for her;
The one whose coming made her soul awaken,
Whose face is fragrance, and whose feet are fire;
The one by whom her being shall be shaken
With dreams and deep desire."

And then she rose, and to the casement hastened,
And flung it wide, and, leaning outward, gazed:
Above, the night hung, moon and starlight chastened;
Below, with shadows mazed,
The garden bloomed; around her and o'erhead,
All seemed at pause—save one wild star that streamed,
One rose that fell. And then she sighed, and said,
"I must have dreamed, have dreamed."

And then, again, she seemed to hear it speak,
 A moth that murmured of a star attained—
 Or was it but the fountain whispering weak,
 White where the moonbeams rained?
 And still it grew; and still the sound insisted,
 Louder and sweeter, burning into form,
 Until, at last, a presence, starlight-misted,
 It shone there, rosy warm,

Crying: "Come down! long have I watched and waited!
 Come down! Draw near! or, like some splendid flower,
 Let down thy hair! so I may climb, as fated,
 Into thy heart's high tower.
 Lower! bend lower! so thy heart may hear me,
 Thy soul may clasp me! Beautiful above
 All beautiful things, behold me; yea, draw near me!
 Behold! for I am Love."



AS TO GOSSIPING

"MY dear," said Mrs. Cawker to her daughter, "when you are at Mrs. Cumso's this afternoon, I hope you won't think of repeating that bit of gossip about Mrs. Gilfoyle that Mrs. Fosdick told us this afternoon."

"Why, mama?"

"Well, because it would be ungenerous and unkind, and I don't think Mrs. Gilfoyle would like it told; and, besides, I want to tell it to Mrs. Cumso myself."



HER FORTE

GRACE—Do you not admit that a woman is the best judge of another woman's character?

GWENDOLYN—Yes, a good judge; but a better executioner.



REPARTEE

MISS REESKAY (*patronizingly*)—Rather embarrassing for you, I should think, always to be blushing when you shouldn't.

MISS DAYMURE—And equally embarrassing for you, I should think, never to be blushing when you should!



LANDLORD—Young man, you should pay as you go.

GUEST—Very good, my dear sir, but I sha'n't go for three or four months yet.

"TWO WOMEN GRINDING AT THE MILL"

By Emery Pottle

TOWARD evening, a little breeze crept languidly through the cramped spaces left between the houses to the south, played listlessly with the leaves on the horse-chestnut tree in the back yard, and touched madame's firm, white bosom with a hint of coolness, as she dressed composedly by an open upper window.

"Thanks to God," she murmured, piously, "for I had died of the heat without it." Michael, her husband, called vigorously from below, "Francesca, the soup!" Madame, with a hasty movement or two, thrust herself into her crackling white shirt-waist, and descended to the kitchen, twisting a blue ribbon about her throat as she went. "The lot of women is indeed hard," she sighed.

The shabby little restaurant on the quiet side-street, off lower Fifth avenue, began to fill, leisurely. The familiar patrons of the place entered assuredly, and made straight through the kitchen to their time-reserved tables, in the high-fenced enclosure back of the house. The sultry May heat sapped their desire to talk, and, after the usual kindly greetings to madame—it was impossible not to answer her infectious laugh and vivacious, "*Buona sera*"—they settled into weary silence or low-voiced commonplaces, broken by irritated admonitions to madame's three children—the diminutive waiters at the tables.

The four old artists came with the faded woman who looked like the Empress Eugénie; the Italian count—a riding-master up-town—took his little table under the ledge of the rain pipe,

and waited for the girl who used to be in the "Florodora" sextette; the sculptor and the woman who could not possibly have been his wife, settled comfortably into their corner; the thin-faced little girl in stringy white mull—the daughter of some famous dead *littérateur*—began to smoke her interminable French cigarettes, with the eager-eyed young lad who always brought her; the woman who did newspaper work, and had dull black circles under her eyes, drank her nightly three rye high-balls, and looked furtively for some one to dine with her. The loud voices of a party of hysterical women, who had daringly come with some men to see bohemia—and believed they had found it—jarred on the growing coolness and twilight.

Mrs. Lemoine stole in quietly. She was in that state of nervous desperation where solitude is acute anguish. She felt that she must be near enough to her fellow-beings to touch them with her hands, but not to speak to them. So, she had remembered Francesca's—shabby, good-natured, unquestioning, companionable Francesca's, with the good soup and the good salad.

Bullet-headed little Sandro hailed her with joy. "Mama," he shouted, "it is the handsome lady! *Ecco!*"

"Mees Lemoine!" cried Francesca, with outstretched hands. "Eet iss so long since I see you! And the gentleman? He no longer come?" Marcia Lemoine reddened at the question.

The other diners stared idly for a moment, as Raymond, Sandro and Bébé crowded about her and bore her impressively to a tiny table under the horse-chestnut tree, in the rear of the

yard. Madame bustled away for the bottle of red wine and the saucer of sardines and olives.

"Not changed," mused Marcia Lemoine, looking out over the ingenuous scene, "not changed since I saw it last. There's Michael in the kitchen, ladling soup, and madame as frank and Italian and sweet as ever—she's growing bent and worn, like all their women, though she's only twenty-two. And the same old diners—and a few horrid new ones. No, dear"—to Bébé—"no ice; and it seems very nice to see you again in your pretty frock. Yes, it's the same—all but myself; I am changed."

We grow fond, in time, of making that admission; it seems to assure us that we are missing no experiences in life. And Marcia Lemoine had not been a woman to miss experiences—when they meant successes. The one fault she found in "*Pilgrim's Progress*" was that *Mr. Worldly Wiseman* was not a woman.

The noise of chatting and laughter ran high in staccato, or subsided again to a sustained, confused middle tone. Madame jested, weariness forgotten. The suave bass of the oldest artist, relating gay incidents of Dickens in America, flowed on smoothly. The breeze strengthened, and discreetly fluttered the family wash, which hung at a safe height above the tables. Corks popped familiarly—from long use. The rough area fences softened into mysterious, romantic barriers. Lights in the overtowering apartments, like chaste signals, flickered and failed. Amorous tunes from wandering hurdy-gurdies enchanted by their very distance. It was the dining hour of those who spoke bohemia, or thought bohemia, or accepted bohemia because it is cheap. Marcia Lemoine let her striving, struggling brain ease to repose, and, for a moment, felt as if this sort of thing were more in her way of life than what she had chosen.

Gradually, the careless habitués departed—leisurely, stopping to press madame's eloquent hand, to drink a last coffee, to pat the Bébé's formal

curls, to snap a nickel to Sandro and Raymond. But still Marcia lingered. The yard was empty and cool; and the tables, stripped of their soiled cloths, were piled one upon another against the fence. In the scrubby little garden-plot in the centre, Michael thrust a sharpened stick, and, on the end of it, he put a fat tallow candle. The flare of it sent grotesque shadows mocking up and down the walls of the house opposite.

Marcia sank into a reverie as bizarre as the scene around her. Looking up suddenly, she saw Sarah Leonard beside her.

"Miss Leonard!" she stammered, confused for a moment.

"I'm terribly tired," the girl said, helplessly. "Can I sit down?" Marcia looked at her, curiously—she did not know her well. "Bring me coffee, Bébé," continued Miss Leonard. "No, nothing else—coffee." She turned to Mrs. Lemoine again, and laughed, weakly. "Did you ever know a woman in New York who wasn't terribly tired?"

In the yellowish flicker, she made a strange picture, not unattractive. She was a large woman, who made ineffectual attempts to disguise her flesh. Like many women of her size, she vacillated between dignity and immature helplessness. To-night, she wore with a certain moist grace, a lavender gown of thin stuff, covered with straggling, pinkish flowers; her heavy, reddish hair was beautiful, despite its untidiness.

"I'm going to smoke," she said; and added, "do you mind?"

Marcia answered, for the first time. "No. Are you so tired? Perhaps, the cigarette will rest you?"

"Yes," Miss Leonard assented, eagerly; "yes, if anything ever can rest any one."

"But, surely, life is not quite so cruel as never to give us rest?" said Mrs. Lemoine, aimlessly.

"You think so?" Sarah Leonard spoke doubtfully. "Are you satisfied?"

"Satisfied?"

"Yes; with life?"

Mrs. Lemoine smiled, rather bitterly, as she parried. "What does it matter? If I were satisfied, some one else might only be the more miserable."

The girl opposite flushed, painfully. "You believe that?" she queried.

"Oh, yes; that is the sub-plot in all our little dramas."

From a shadowy angle, Sandro began to play his mandolin, accompanied by the willing, but inconsequent, Raymond on the guitar. "*O dolce Neapoli*," they strummed out, with pathetic devotion. Crude as it was, the hungering music caught at Marcia Lemoine's heart—the real Italy, that other night, the Venice of dreams and songs, and—*him!* She forgot the woman by her side.

Sarah Leonard fingered her cigarette, nervously, and glanced incessantly over her shoulder, toward the entrance. Without warning, she burst into tears.

"Tell them to stop," she sobbed. "Sandro, please stop! Raymond!" She turned, half defiantly, to Mrs. Lemoine. "I hate it. It makes me nervous. I can't bear music. Don't go, please, don't go and leave me! I—I——"

Marcia Lemoine, who had risen, sat down again, touched by the note of distress in the girl's voice.

"You are in trouble?" she asked. "Can I help?"

Sarah Leonard calmed herself, with an effort. "You help? I—I don't know that you can help. Can you listen and be still?"

"I think so," replied Mrs. Lemoine. "That's the first lesson women learn—to listen and be still."

Her companion leaned both elbows on the table, and spoke, challengingly.

"Have you ever wanted something in your life so much that you have cried out ceaselessly for it, and have been ready to take it—at the highest price life, or death, could put on it?"

Mrs. Lemoine's hands trembled, as she reached for her glass of water, but her voice was even.

"Yes."

"Did you take it?"

"I have not—yet."

"If you had known a girlhood bitter as respectable poverty could make it; if you had lived in a nasty, horrid suburb, where they talked of nothing but servants, and, 'Which train did you come out on?' and the price of beef and coal; if your father had died when you were twenty-four and left you with a mother and a sick sister to care for; if you'd had to give up the man you were beginning to love, and had come to this city, to write on a newspaper about things you hated and despised, and live in a Harlem flat, and get home at two o'clock every night, to go to bed wretched and sick, and to dream that you'd lost your position, only to get up the next day and do it all over again, with the difference of more heat, or more cold, or more rain—if you'd done all this, I say, with the hunger for the things you want most—love, a man's love, and a child of your own—crushed down inside you into an aching little heap—and then—and then had the chance to get the great, real thing—wouldn't you take it?"

Up to the last words, there was the splendid dignity of suffering about her, but the rankling thorn of indecision pricked her, and, at the end, she weakened to pathetic pleading.

Marcia Lemoine was slow to speak. The simple solution of some of life's problems is too often dangerously ready on one's tongue.

Sarah Leonard beat her hands impatiently on the table.

"Oh, you think I'm horrid, I suppose, and cheap."

"No, I don't think that; I—tell me more."

"Tell you more? Why I should tell more, or you listen, I cannot imagine—we are not great friends."

Michael and Francesca had come out to the kitchen-door, and stood,

arm in arm, looking into the little garden. He kissed her.

"Oh, I wish my life were as simple as theirs! Tell more?" The girl spoke softly. "I love him. But we cannot marry. He is separated from his wife, who will not be divorced—not for his happiness—she does not love him, but she loves to wear his name—it is a good one. And he—he loves me—and—and—wants me to go away with him—somewhere where it's quiet, and there are flowers, and the world is kind. And I—am going. You think I am half-insane to tell you this, don't you?" she added.

"Women must be very wise, nowadays, not to take life as they find it—that is a false doctrine. My dear, have you counted the cost of all this?" Mrs. Lemoine spoke constrainedly, as one who relies on the words, and not on the living voice back of them, to convince.

"Your mother," she continued, "and your sister—what of them?"

"I can provide for them—he is rich," Sarah answered, too eagerly.

"Provide what? Your mother is old, isn't she? And I think you said once that she was not strong. And your sister? She is not well, you say? Can you give back to them the peace they are going to lose—the care, the love, you gave them? Do you know what it means for a woman to run away? Society's wall of defense can be lightly scaled from within in a night, but, in the morning, my dear girl, all the king's horses and all the king's men—or women—will avail you nothing to get back. Rough hew discretion, Miss Leonard, and you'll find no divinity at work to polish up your virtue." If there was a perfunctory note in all this, Sarah Leonard did not perceive it. Pain is sometimes mercifully illogical.

"You're hurting me awfully," she said, childishly. "You don't want me to have what is my right—my possession."

Marcia looked at her, coldly.

"Why should I care what you have, or have not? I'm merely telling you

that a woman's title to her possessions is a slender thing."

"Go on, then. These are not new hurts—they're old ones broken open," said Sarah, stolidly.

Mrs. Lemoine softened, and she put out her hand with a tender gesture.

"I'm terribly sorry for you."

"Why?"

"Because I—I, too, have—because, don't you see, my dear, you—you haven't the courage to do a thing like this. Don't be angry with me. You're desperate now, and you think you've put your regret behind you, but it's bound to come back. Is your love proof against the thought of those two women of yours breaking their hearts over you? can it face cold looks, shrugged shoulders? You care for your social position? Yes, I thought so. Can you give up and give up and give up, until there is nothing between you and hell but the love of a man—a good man, if you like—and can you live serenely, day after day, unsailed by the sickening fear that that very love may sometime be taken from you?" Mrs. Lemoine had spoken vehemently, but added, in a low, almost inaudible tone, "if you can do this, my dear—then—*take the chance!*"

Sarah Leonard stared at the speaker with frightened eyes. At the last words, she put her hands to her head, with a little, hurt cry.

"Oh, I'm afraid!"

In the flickering black and yellow, Mrs. Lemoine smiled. "Poor girl," she thought, "I had to do it. Poor, miserable heart! Building her tower before she had counted the cost! After all, what have I kept her from?—only herself. If a woman can shut out regret, virtue is the least of her possessions."

They sat in silence.

At last, Sarah Leonard spoke. "You're right. I cannot go with him. You've stripped me of my cloak of sweet reasoning. You've taken away my courage; you've broken open old sores; you've put me back at the mill, again to grind. Do women thank one another for these things? I do not

know. My mother and my sister would—if they knew; perhaps society, too, will hypocritically thank you for saving me for it. Some day, I may bless you; but, now, I think—I almost—hate you."

Mrs. Lemoine did not answer. She bent her head wearily to the slow, measured words.

Sarah Leonard came close to her, looking strong and commanding. She put her hands heavily on Mrs. Lemoine's shoulders. "Tell me," she said, "if I were you, should I have done this thing I am refusing to do?"

Mrs. Lemoine's slender shoulders quivered under the compelling hands. Suddenly, she flung off the restraint, and answered, simply:

"Yes."

"I thought so," laughed Sarah Leonard, bitterly. She hesitated. "Are you—?" she began, with startled penetration into the other woman's purpose.

Marcia Lemoine put out her hand, in quick, imperious protest.

"You must not ask that," she said.

They said good night rather dully, and Sarah Leonard stumbled out into the light of the kitchen.

"Two women grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left," she sighed.

Bébé and Sandro were muttering quaint little Italian prayers at their mother's knee, when Michael called to Marcia Lemoine, who still sat in the garden.

"The Signor Harry is here, madame, and asks for you." She rose quickly and went out.

Then, Raymond blew out the fat tallow candle, and Francesca's was quiet for the night.

"My dear, the most extraordinary thing you ever heard!" said Euphemia Van Corliss the next afternoon, when she met Penfield Wilkins in the ping-pong room at the Country Club.

"What on earth?" he queried. "Been flirting with a real prince, or has your husband been beating you?"

"Nonsense. My dear, Mrs. Lemoine has eloped! Yes, my dear, *eloped!*"

"Good Lord!"

"With Harry Frances! And old Lemoine is perfectly furious! How that woman has deceived us! And what a silly price to pay for an affair! Do you suppose she has counted the cost? Of course, we can't ever know her again, you know."

Wilkins laid down his racquet, thoughtfully. "I knew her as a wise woman," he said. "I think she knew, to the last farthing, the price of her—well, whatever name shall be given to it in the final reckoning."

"Well, as for me, I'm not half so afraid of the final reckoning as I am of the present reckoning."

"Exactly. And there is the difference in women. It's a neat point that's involved. Mrs. Van Corliss, will you serve? One fault."



DUTIFUL CHILD

CALLER—Isn't this your sister's birthday?

LITTLE BESSIE—Yeth, thir; but you muthn't athk me how old the ith, cauth I promithed not to tell.



CLARA—Why that flush of embarrassment as you left the room?

CLARICE—'Sh! The clock on my stocking had run down.

AT LAST

I DREAMED, last night, that thou didst fly to me
 With outstretched hands, crying, "At last, at last!"
 Then time and space were not. The changeful past
 Fled far, as pale wraiths from the sunrise flee.
 Death bared no flaming sword 'twixt thee and me;
 Thou wert alive! Thy lips were warm on mine,
 Thy dark eyes shone, and those strong arms of thine
 Held me close clasped, in wordless ecstasy.

O love, dear love, we have been parted long!
 The tides of life and death have borne us far
 Each from the other. Where the immortals are,
 Thou wearest still, exultant, lithe and strong,
 Thy crown of youth, resplendent as the star
 That sang for very joy earth's matin song—
 While I, still loitering in life's dim maze,
 Grow old and wan, remembering other days!

JULIA C. R. DORR.



SQUALLY WEATHER

"I AM afraid," said the commodore's small son, as he saw his mother approaching with a frown and a slipper, "that those clouds on ma's face indicate a spanking breeze."
 Thereupon he scuttled himself.



THOSE DEAR GIRLS

MADGE—Dolly sent me a present, as usual. She always remembers my birthdays.

MARJORIE—Then, my dear, she has a better memory than you have.



"AUNT MADOLDA, while you were away in the city there were two funerals."
 "Mercy on me! Well, I'm glad I didn't know it while I was a-visitin'.
 It would have sp'iled all my pleasure."

“LITTLE LONE LOON”

By G. B. Burgin

WYNYARD coughed, delicately. The earl frowned. “Such an infernal liberty,” he muttered. He sat up, pushed aside the silken rug thrown loosely over his knees, and looked longingly at the door of the sick-room.

“I beg your lordship’s pardon?”

“I say it is an infernal liberty to expect me to die,” continued the earl, pettishly. “I’m perfectly content to stay here. What do I know of the other world? Here, my status is properly defined. People know where to place me. But in the next world!” He shrugged his shoulders, feebly.

“It *may* be peopled by persons of your lordship’s rank,” suggested the lawyer, with an air of dubiety which he did his best to conceal. “There are no precedents to guide us.”

“It *may*; but, then,” the earl frowned again, “it *may* not. Besides, in either event, it is sure to be rather mixed; poor people are always so pious.”

“If I may venture to suggest, your lordship would not be compelled to recog—”

“I don’t know.” The earl became thoughtful. “I’m rather inclined to think there are no class distinctions. My chaplain generally makes a point of that when he wishes to be unpleasant. The servants’ hall, too, seems to take it for granted that, if anything, it has a prior claim.”

“The biblical statement is: ‘There are many mansions,’” quoted the lawyer, softly. “‘Mansions,’ my lord; not ‘cottages.’ ‘Mansions!’ Presumptive evidence—if one may use the term in this connection—would seem to as-

sume that your lordship will not be expected to meet your tenants on terms of equality.”

“Oh, I’m not thinking of myself,” the earl rejoined, tossing off his cough mixture as if it were claret. “It’s my wife and son. I’m anxious about them.”

“Your wife!” The lawyer was aghast. “I never knew that your lordship had married.”

“Yes—and son. ‘Little Lone Loon!’” His lips lingered on the name.

Wynyard rose, as if to ring the bell for a nurse. The earl frowned again.

“Sit down, Wynyard. I meant to tell you, some day, but this infernal illness of mine is carrying me off quicker than I thought. Lady Charterys was a squaw.”

“Your lordship—really—I’d better ring. You, with all due deference, you are wandering.”

“Sit down!” thundered the earl. “If I am content to allow you to sit in my presence, you needn’t object.”

“Really, your lordship, it is not seemly.”

“Not seemly! If you did go to heaven, you wouldn’t be happy without a Debrett.”

“It might be useful,” the lawyer drily admitted.

“Lady Charterys was an Indian squaw. I met her when she taught in a mission school near Winnipeg, nearly thirty years ago.”

“And your lordship honored her with your lordship’s—attentions?”

“I honored her by not dishonoring her,” hastily ejaculated the earl.

The lawyer looked at the ceiling.

"To be sure," he murmured, disappointedly. "Blood always tells in the long run."

"Gad, sir!" the earl raised himself on his pillows, "she honored me by marrying me. A very remarkable woman."

"Marrying you? How—how exacting! She was pure Indian? That is the only way in which I can account for her presumption."

"As you say, she was pure Indian; but the presumption was mine. She wouldn't leave her own country."

"May I be permitted to inquire why?"

The earl breathed heavily. "It seems profanation to tell so sentimental a story to an old document like you, Wynyard. But you ought to know, so that you can take the necessary steps about my son. 'I will marry you,' she said, 'on one condition;' and, like a fool, I promised to observe that condition."

"Surely, a promise from a person of your lordship's rank to one of hers is a—a condescension which need not necessarily be strictly observed."

"Well, I thought otherwise, and kept my word like a Charterys. Perhaps, you do not see any difference between a Charterys and a fool."

The lawyer bowed in pained surprise. "How could I presume to couple the two!"

The earl chuckled. "You must remember that she was an educated woman, Wynyard, and magnificently handsome; but they hadn't educated all the primeval passions out of her, thank God! She did me the honor to fall in love with me."

"I can well understand that." The lawyer gazed with admiration at the magnificent man—magnificent even in decay—before him.

"You understand! *you!* old parchment that you are!"

The lawyer bowed. "Parchment takes a certain time to dry. I, too, have been young."

"Centuries ago. Now you have certainly reached the dry stage. But

I am forgetting. What do you think the condition was?"

"That the marriage should be a real one?"

"You forget, sir, that I am nineteenth earl of Charterys, and that my word is equal to another man's oath. The condition was that I should leave Lady Charterys a month after our marriage."

"Why?"

"Why! Gad, sir, I was a handsome man, and wooed and won her upon the banks of the Red River. The way that damnable Red River mud stuck to me would have discouraged any one but a Charterys. At first, I didn't know she was educated; she didn't know who I was. I was thirty; she was sixteen. She thought me a mere hunter. I swore the mission people to secrecy, because they knew who I really was. We met by the river, and"—his lordship sighed, heavily, his blue eyes clouded—"cynic though I was, I loved her."

"Loved her!"

"Yes—loved her. I, who had met all the handsomest women in Europe, fell in love with an Indian girl, and, what's more, never fell out of it again."

"I cannot understand, my lord—I cannot understand why inscrutable Providence permitted a peer to—"

"You cannot understand! No; you wouldn't. Ah-h! you should have seen her—seen the pride, passion and power in her glorious eyes, the pure soul of her, the great heart of her. I tell you, Wynyard, I would have flung my coronet in the mud, had she willed it."

"Practically, your lordship did—in the Red River mud. May I ask her reason for leaving it there?"

"Her reason! Give me some more of that infernal stuff, if you expect me to last an hour or two longer. The reason! She didn't wish to disgrace me. Wanted to reign in my heart as a fresh and fragrant memory which nothing could dim. I pleaded with her, knelt to her, but she was inexorable."

"Her motive, my lord? her motive?" The lawyer rubbed dry lips with dry fingers. "Aboriginal races seldom have any sense of proportion."

"Her motive! I'll tell you her motive. 'We are both young,' she said; 'both young; and the glamour of life is upon us. You come of that northern stock which grows slowly, ripens slowly, dies slowly. I am an Indian—a woman at fifteen. I shall mature quickly, become a withered, faded hag, while you still remain beautiful as Apollo. In a year, you would hate me, look upon me as a clog, leave me. But I shall leave you. Though it grind my heart to powder, fill my days with anguish, rob me of all interest in life, yet I will it to be so. If we part now, I shall be ever fresh and fair to you. You will meet other women, but you will never forget me. "Forever wilt thou love, and I be fair." In your last hour, you will turn to me; all your glorious, beautiful youth will come back to you; we will wander hand in hand through the holy silence of the Bush; our lips will cling together as they clung in the old days; all the rapture and delight of dewy dawns, of Summer nights beneath the radiant stars, the magic delirium and joy of love, will still be ours. I will never forget you, but will live for our child. When you are on your death-bed, I shall know, and will come to you in the spirit. Hand clasping hand, lip locked to lip, we shall once more tread beside the river as of old.'"

"And——?"

"To keep the one ideal, I have lost the one woman. She was right. To embrace an ideal is to lose it. A woman's love is like that strange eastern fruit which holds its perfection but a little moment. Men have spent their lives in waiting for that moment—and have missed it. I took it, and have lived my life trying to forget it."

"Ah!" said the lawyer. There was a faint glow upon his withered cheek. "What do you wish me to do?"

"She will die at the same time as myself. But our son lives. Find him. The papers are in yonder cab-

inet. If he wants the title, let him take it. 'Little Lone Loon,' she called him, when she wrote to tell me of his birth, because she used to sit and watch a half-grown loon floating sadly along the river—a loon which was always alone. Help me! help me up! Give me your arm."

The earl rose heavily from the couch, his blue eyes flashing fire, his form straight as an arrow. "Don't you see her?" he cried; "don't you see her? Don't you see——?"

He staggered heavily against the lawyer, who, looking toward the end of the room, saw, with affrighted eyes, the form of a beautiful Indian girl slowly coming toward them. As she came, she smiled. Her arms were outstretched to Charterys; she reached him, clasped him to her; their lips met.

The lawyer retreated against the wall. When he looked up, Charterys had fallen back on the couch, his arms stretched out through the empty air. As the lawyer looked, he murmured a name, and died.

Wynyard took a bunch of keys from a little side-table, and, filled with indignant anger, approached the cabinet. He would destroy all evidence of so foul a blot on the honor of an ancient house; he would burn the marriage-certificate, remove every trace of the story, let it perish. Yes, that was the right key. The earl's niece, Lady Angela, would never know how near she had been to losing the Charterys estates.

With a frightened glance at the placid face of the dead man, he stole toward the cabinet, unlocked it, drew out some papers yellow with years, and hastily opened them. They were a marriage-certificate and a certificate of the birth of "James Hinton Charterys—'Little Lone Loon.'" Yes, that was all. Stay, there was a will. He would make an end of the documents, for Lady Angela's and the family's sake. This half-breed should never know the truth.

He walked toward the fireplace to cast the papers into the flames. A

cold grasp—the grasp of an invisible hand—gripped his throat. Some one stood between him and the fire.

As he started back, the dead man's eyes opened, turned to him with terrible fury, and closed again. The lawyer, tottering to the cabinet, replaced the papers, and rang for the nurse.

"His lordship has just passed away," he said, in broken tones; "just passed away!"

The nurse looked at the beautiful face before her—a face which the Great Consoler had once more softened into youth. "If the hair were not gray, I should think him the handsomest man I had ever seen," she said, softly; and went away to summon the physicians.

Wynyard, approaching the dead man, took the cold right hand in his own. "I swear to carry out your lordship's wishes," he said, respectfully.

The grip upon his throat relaxed; the dead man smiled.

II

WYNYARD, like the celebrated detectives of fiction, had "a clue." He went back to Lady Angela at the Windsor Hotel, and told her that their journey from Winnipeg to Montreal had not been in vain. The half-breed earl had become a professor at McGill University, where he was known under the name of Hinton, and had already achieved great repute for so young a man. On making sure of his identity, the lawyer had sent Professor Hinton a note, requesting him to call at the Windsor at three, when he would hear of something to his advantage.

"And what did he say?" asked beautiful Lady Angela, blue-eyed and blonde, tall, willowy, with a short upper lip, and an aquiline nose softened just enough by femininity to redeem it from the reproach of being severe.

"What did he say?" The lawyer gazed doubtfully on his fair young client. "He said that, when he had

finished his lecture, he would not fail to come."

"That sounds rather like uncle's son," mused Lady Angela. "Now, Mr. Wynyard, remember that you are not to interfere. I will see him alone. Give me the documents."

"But, my dear Lady An——"

"You are tired," she said, imperiously. "You are tired—worn out by these horrible journeyings through the wilds of the Northwest, the sadness of the Rockies, the monotonous rolling prairies—being suffocated at night in a Pullman, and roasted during the day. Go and have a nap, and I will let you know what happens when the professor calls. Remember that we sail to-morrow for home. Then, you can have a nice, long rest, and tell your friends at the Law Society all about your wanderings."

"You will be careful," pleaded the lawyer. He looked very old and infirm. Somehow, his own vitality had been bound up with that of the late earl. He missed what he called "the grand manner." Besides, he was without kith or kin, and devotedly attached to Lady Angela, who had always been good to him.

"Oh, yes, I will be careful. You forget that he is my cousin."

She led the old man to the door, and helped him into the lift. "Go and lie down," she said, gently. "To-morrow we start for home."

"But if you lose all this money—if Charterys goes to—to the professor!"

"Well, then I shall lose something more valuable than Charterys," the girl half murmured to herself as the lift glided upward. She went thoughtfully back to a reception-room, and awaited the arrival of the professor.

Half an hour later, a waiter brought in his card. "Show him in," she said, calmly; and the professor was shown in.

He looked a little puzzled, adjusted his pince-nez upon the bridge of his aristocratic nose, and bowed to her, inquiringly. "Where is Mr. Wynyard?" he asked. "You are not Mrs. Wynyard?"

She smiled. "No; I am your cousin, Angela Charterys."

He was very good-looking; brown and sunburned, as if he had just returned from the woods, but carefully groomed and beautifully dressed. He, too, had "the grand manner," and was at least six feet four, handsomer even than his father had been. The short-cropped hair was black as jet, and his eyes were bluer than forget-me-nots—blue, but filled with a lasting sadness. The cheek-bones were, perhaps, a trifle prominent. Without his pince-nez, he would have passed anywhere for an army man.

"Cousin Angela, I am charmed to meet you."

She was a trifle disappointed at the way in which he discounted her attempt to surprise him. "Then, you know everything?"

"Oh, yes. I saw the account of my father's death in the papers."

"Your father's death!" She was still more amazed at the coolness with which he took the news.

"Yes. When I met him at Heronshaw last year, I saw that he could not live more than a few months."

"You — saw — him — at — Heronshaw?"

"Yes. I went to England with young Wigton. It occurred to me that I should like to meet my father, without revealing my identity. He never even suspected it."

"But how did you know of your—your identity?" Her tone became a little confused.

"My mother told me, long ago. I have never been allowed to forget it." He glanced down at his black clothes. "She died the same day as my father."

"Have you any proofs of your—your pretensions?" asked Lady Angela.

"Proofs! It had not occurred to me that they were necessary. My mother's word sufficed me."

"You are right," she said, impulsively. "I bring you the proofs."

He glanced at the certificates with polite curiosity, then handed them back to her.

"They are yours," she insisted, returning them to him.

"Oh, very well. Have you been searching for me? If I had known that you were coming, I would have saved you the trouble."

Lady Angela entered into a spirited narrative of the search for him. They had begun at Winnipeg, and had wandered hundreds of miles.

The professor listened, attentively.

"Why didn't you come forward at once?" Lady Angela asked. "You must have known that some one was aware of the story."

The professor smiled. "Suppose you had felt inclined to dispute my claim? Was I in a position to fight you without these?" He looked at the yellow papers.

She grew indignant. Here was the half-blood in him coming out. "I am a Charterys," she declared, with emphasis. "We do not steal."

He smiled again. "You won't mind my asking you a question or two?"

"Certainly not." She went to the window. The man was as cautious as a lawyer.

"Won't you sit down?" he asked.

"I—I had rather not."

"I only wanted to know whether, at the time of my father's death, you were in any danger of losing these papers?"

The hot blood mounted to her cheeks, for Wynyard had told her everything.

"I understand your silence. You are very loyal."

"I have said nothing," she flashed. "Here are your papers. Any further communication you have to make to me can be made through Mr. Wynyard."

"I think not. Perhaps, you will permit me to explain myself, and to ask you yet another question?"

She bowed, half-way to the door.

"How does my unexpected appearance on the scene affect you and Hugo Vallance? I heard of your engagement when I was in England."

"Hugo Vallance!" She knew that the professor's appearance made her

marriage impossible. "Oh, we have said good-bye to each other," she cried, bitterly. "He is a poor man, and must marry money."

"He will marry money. He will marry you."

The professor took the certificates and will, and methodically tore them in shreds. "Cousin Angela, allow me to give them to you as a wedding present."

She was stupefied; her eyes danced with joy. "I—I beg your pardon," she faltered. "I misjudged you. I cannot tell you how sorry I am. Of course, I do not intend to accept such an act of quixotism. You will easily be able to procure certified copies."

"The mission records have all been destroyed by fire; my father's will was written in his own hand. There is no evidence on the face of the earth that James Hinton, nineteenth earl of Charterys, ever married an Indian girl."

"But we know he did."

"The law does not know. The law requires everything to be proved, irrefutably."

"As if that mattered! What do I care about the law's requirements!" She came close up to him, her beautiful eyes aglow. "Cousin, I will not accept this sacrifice. Why do you make it?"

"For my mother's sake."

"For your mother's sake?"

"For my mother's sake. Her meeting with my father was a dream; their brief happiness was a dream—a dream which lasted for both their lives. I am a Canadian. I could not breathe, live, move, in England. To go there—to become a Charterys—would be to destroy that dream. The story of my mother and father's love was for themselves alone. I will not share it with the rest of the world. I used to think that rank, wealth, honor, were great things to win for one's self. But, in the heart of every man and woman, there is something which is sacred, which the world cannot share, which must not be sullied by the talk of idle tongues—something greater, sweeter, more lasting than rank, or wealth, or

worldly honor, and that something is—love!"

"You are in love, cousin?" She put her hand softly on his arm.

He smiled down upon her from his magnificent height. "Yes—I love."

"And that is why you understand how to lose rank and wealth for something which is greater than either."

"That is why I understand."

"You will take me to her?" she almost whispered. "I want to meet such a woman. She will teach me how to love truly."

"I can take you to her, but she can never teach you how to love." He turned away.

"Never! Why?"

"She died six months ago. I shall never marry."

"You will never marry! Some day—perhaps—when you——"

"I shall never marry. There is always the one woman waiting for me in the Great Silence. I am successful, liked, respected, on the verge of fame—and—and it all comes back to the speechless lips, the closed eyes, the woman waiting for me in the Great Silence."

"But you are so young—so young! Your life will be so sad!"

He smiled. "No, there is no sadness. She will never change, and I cannot. I have work to do in the world—work which I can do better as James Hinton than as twentieth earl of Charterys. When that is done, I go to the Great Silence, where she waits to take me by the hand, and lead me—whither I know not. But God knows and she knows, and one day I shall know, also."

"Now I understand; and I will teach Hugo to understand." She put up her lips to his. "Cousin, good-bye. We sail to-morrow."

He gravely touched her lips with his, and went away, leaving the discolored fragments of paper lying unheeded on the floor.

Angela drew a locket from her breast, and Vallance's face smiled back at her. "No," she said, softly, "he is right. A Charterys does not change."

THE VERNAL FIRE

FROM tip to tip of the briar,
I see it kindle and run—
The mystical, vernal fire,
Whose source is the sun.

Along the slopes it thrills,
Greening the umber mold,
And it spangles the marge of the rills
With the cowslip-gold.

It flashes out on the cheek
That the rathe hepatica turns;
And the violet, shy and meek,
With its ardor burns.

Every bearing bough
Is prescient, and every blade,
From the mountain's brackened brow
To the depths of the glade.

I feel it, too—am fain
With a touch of the old desire;
My lost youth comes again
With the vernal fire.

Love, your hand once more!
Would that the dream might stay—
The rapt dream o'er and o'er,
For aye and a day!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



OR DOUBLE ENTENTE

MISS FRESHMAN—What is a *double entendre*?
PROFESSOR—A *double entendre* is an excuse to say an improper thing in a half-proper way.



SAPPE HED—Upon me soul, you know, I'm desperately in love.
GLADYS—Who told you?

HER LYRICS

FOR my Sweetheart, who is fair
 From the nadir of her toes
 To the zenith of her hair—
 For the sister of a rose,
 Is it strange my fancy goes
 Making music everywhere,
 And that all my dreams disclose
 Lyric trifles light as air?

She is dainty, debonair—
 Lip and brow, and neck and nose;
 Song's delight and song's despair
 Are her frills and furbelows,
 Feathers, ribbons, rings and bows—
 Anything that she may wear;
 She can even make of prose
 Lyric trifles light as air.

She is frivolous, I dare
 Say, and silly, I suppose;
 Very little do I care
 What such idle guessing shows!
 Day by day, she dearer grows
 To my heart, and I declare
 Hope but reaps where Beauty sows
 Lyric trifles light as air.

ENVOY

Lovers—likewise all of those
 Who have loved—accept a share
 Of these sweets that Love bestows—
 Lyric trifles light as air.

FELIX CARMEN.



LIP SERVICE

HE—It's right on my lips to ask you for a kiss.
 SHE—It's right on my lips to give you.



SOMETIMES, the only benefit a man derives from marriage is experience

GOD'S OWN COUNTRY

By Douglas Story

AS a cosmopolitan, a wanderer on the face of the earth, a sojourner in strange places, it were difficult to explain why certain brief resting-places have appealed to me as home, while other, more permanent domiciles have been but street and number, things to call up on a telephone. A man's loves may not be told by the number of his mistresses, neither his homes by an inventory of his residences. These are matters of the heart, born of the affections, wholly independent of the charm of the locality, or the comeliness of the woman; of the splendor of the raiment, or the magnificence of the habitation. The meaning of home is a thing bred in the bone of each nation, differing with the prejudices of each nationality. The Arab's idea of home is as different from that of the Swiss mountaineer as is the conception of the New Englander from that of the Parisian. Yet, men of all these contrasting races have died of nostalgia induced by separation from the home of their fancy.

To me, as a Briton, home, in its wide sense, must ever be that ragged little island whose sons, to the third and fourth generations, know no other name for the land of their race. The colonist of Cape Town and of Melbourne, of Toronto and of Georgetown, retains the word with a sacred scrupulosity for the haggard little country which neither he, nor his father, nor his father's father may ever once have seen. To me, as a Scotsman, "ma ain countrie" is a land of great, rounded hillsides; of swift-rushing streams; of vast, heath-clad solitudes; of cozy, wee homesteads nestled beside the waters. To me, as a

cosmopolitan, home is a thing without definite form, amorphous, shapeless, a name for those few places where I have walked alone with God, have seen deep into my soul, and understood its significance.

To the Frenchman there is no home, only *la France*, mayhap *la belle France*—the phrase which in him incites to a fierce patriotism, just as *la gloire* inspires his battle spirit. In him—unless, indeed, he be a Breton—there is no homesickness, only a *maladie du pays*, a feverish longing to return to the shaded cafés, the chestnut-bordered boulevards, of Paris; the steep, sun-baked streets of Marseilles; the warm, vine-clad slopes of the Côte d'Or. Pierre Loti—he of the wave-battered, Bay-of-Biscay coast—records with wonder that the Bretons, "these men of rough appearance, who live on the sea, keep always at the bottom of their hearts the unique and ineffaceable memory of some village nook, or of some little, sweet face that once they loved." It may be, such home-love was born of their profession, not of their nationality.

The German's home is a wholly different conception—a Fatherland, a place made sacred by the associations of family, of love, of births, of deaths, of all the joys and sorrows of kinship. The Frenchman abroad yearns for his *café chantant*, his *apératif*, his theatre, his gaiety, and his emotional license. The German dreams of his God's acre, of the old father by the fire-side, of the family anniversaries, of the place set apart by a holy tradition. To him, home is an altar at which to worship the shades of

his ancestors, to pour out his appreciation of the strong, red blood of the Teutons within him, to preserve the religious faith handed down to him from Odin. Out of the Teuton's home-love have grown his patriotism, his king-love, his submission to the mailed fist. To him, the Kaiser is no mere war lord, no elective head-man of a tribe. He is the King, the lineal descendant of Odin, the chosen of the gods. Without that blood-right, no man may claim kingship in a Teutonic nation, no Napoleon may desecrate the seats of the sons of the gods. Over the German Fatherland, no Pius VII. can arbitrarily place an ambitious Corsican lieutenant of artillery; no carefully schemed revolution of Brumaire can avail to install a dictator. The Teuton's home is no *théâtre des variétés*, as the Frenchman's is; no mausoleum, as is that of the Chinese. It is a gloomy castle on the Rhine, where the words of the first landgrave ring to-day, strong as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

For those city dwellers, who can picture home merely as a solid structure of stone and iron, brick and timber, there is something uncanny about the conception of the nomad, the man of the deserts and the prairies. To him, home is a vast solitude, a horizon-bounded emptiness. Confine him within four walls, and he languishes; lodge him in a city, and he dies. I have lain upon my back on the warm sand of the Soudan, lazily following, with my eyes, the bright star that led the wise men to Bethlehem; and I have understood the home-love of the Arab. I have waked on the grizzled South African veldt as the round, full-blooded sun rose like a salmon from the lake; and have felt the home-love of the Boer. I have lain awake, listening to the mysterious whisperings of the Canadian forests in the night; and have known the home-love of the Blackfoot and the Crow. I have heard the lion roar from his watering-places at the dusk; and have realized the home-love of the Bantu. I have watched the waves of four great oceans; and have pulsed with the home-love of the sailor-

man. To all of these, home is space, unfenced, unbounded, limitless, yet space made familiar by a thousand tricks of color, sound and perfume—a home as distinctive, as inalienable, as the cabin of an Irish peasant, or the manor of an English squire.

To me, the most pathetic figures in history are the homeless ones—the Vanderdeckens and the Wandering Jews—creatures condemned to an eternity of wandering. No other sentence grips the imagination with so profound a sense of its terror as the Nazarene's words to Ahasuerus, the cobbler, when he refused the Man-God permission to rest on his threshold: "Thou shalt wander on earth till I return." Nowhere to live, nothing to live for, condemned to life! It is small wonder the grave smells sweet in the nostrils of the outcast.

To us, living in a country peopled by wanderers and the children of wanderers, the significance of home appeals with a strange conviction. The Americans, alone of all nations, have set a day apart as a Day of Thanksgiving for the possession of a home and the continued right to dwell therein. And yet, for generations, the Americans had no pet name for their country, no love-word for their home. Its designations were cumbersome, unsympathetic, eloquent of the homesickness of the settlers—New England, New Netherland, Virginia, Maryland, Georgia, Louisiana, New France, Nueva España, the United States of America. One could not proclaim his nationality without a circumlocution that was expected of no other civilized being. Even to-day, one cannot get nearer his national appellation than "citizen of the United States." The ancient's, *civis Romanus sum*, was simple and sonorous in comparison.

And so, for long, the inhabitant of New York and San Francisco usurped to himself the name "American"—as unwieldy and as enigmatical a title as "Californian" and "New Yorker" are provincial and confined. For much of this, the traditional policy of the nation was at fault—the Washing-

tonian doctrine of non-interference in foreign affairs, the discomfort of the American discovered abroad. The citizen of the United States might be maltreated in Bulgaria, and murdered in China; his Government did not go to war on his behalf. Its mission was confined to the Western hemisphere. Within the bounds of the New World, its temper was quick, its arm strong to avenge. Beyond these limits, no insult, no cajolery, availed to tempt it. Those citizens who ventured beyond the borders were fools for their pains; they must take such knocks as the world might award them. And, so, the citizen of the United States was left with a home-name that embraced two continents, that was destitute of the son-love which inspired the peoples of all other nations. Nor could it be otherwise in a nation that had endured but a hundred years, whose heterogeneous components never yet had been brought together in the crucible of a common danger, whose people's hearts never yet had beat to a common inspiration. The War of the Revolution had affected but a maniple of the modern nation—that maniple which, for decades later, continued to look upon Great Britain as home. The Civil War sundered such fusion as time had effected among the variously fathered family of the Americans—split it into its antipathetic constituents of Yankee and Rebel. Home-love seemed less than ever a common possession of the Americans. They had neither Fatherland nor all-embracing Home. They were still but sojourners on a continent, dwellers in a house divided against itself.

It was not till the difference with Spain had heated the furnaces of brotherly love to a white heat that the United States could fashion out for herself a pet name. When the soldier from Boston lay side by side with the soldier from Charlestown, in fever-stricken Cuban camps; when the citizen of New York trudged in step with the citizen of Chicago, through squelchy Philippine marshes, the lack of a word by which to designate the land of their

common origin burst upon them as the foundling's first realization of his bastardy. It was then that the American gave to his land its love-name—God's Own Country. The phrase had been used for decades, but always with a local significance. It had stood for one or another of the jealous state-prides that racked the republic. It had not penetrated to the outer world. It was provincial, not national. Occasionally, it might be heard on the deck of an incoming liner, from some perfervid patriot restored to his native vista of skyscrapers; but, out in the wide world, the designation was wholly without significance. To-day, it is universally accepted as the home-name of the American, his cherished term of endearment.

In this choice of a name, there is much of the influence of the Puritan. The Scotsman, strong in his self-sufficiency, speaks of "*ma ain countrie*"; the German, true to the family tradition, acclaims the Fatherland; the Frenchman, assured of his country's preëminence, vaunts "*la France*"; the American, mindful of European persecution and European tyranny, tenders the Almighty the praise, proclaims himself a citizen of God's Own Country. In his humility lies his pride. It is the same pride, curiously secularized, that has held the Chosen People together—a race apart since Jehovah made His covenant with Abraham, at the place Sichem, which was in the plain of Moreh.

It was an American who made immortal the simple phrase, "There's no place like home!" Verily, one must take a long day's journey from New York or Chicago ere he find the home of his childhood's prattle. The home with its mother and its mother-love, its rosy boys and its sweet-faced lasses, has been handed over to the housebreakers. Its place has been taken by hulking, ten-story modernities—steam-heated towers of Babel. Out of these, it were hard to construct home as one dreams of it—coziness were difficult with a radiator; roast beef were at variance with a dumb-waiter; healthy childhood were im-

possible with irascible neighbors to right of one, sensitive neighbors to left of one, nervous neighbors above one, and belligerent neighbors beneath one.

And, yet, home is not altogether a matter of lathe and plaster. My own boyhood was spent beside quiet waters, alone with the sheep and the peewits, in a place where great, green hillsides looked unfailingly upward, where one's lullaby was the ripple of a stream, and one's reveille the cooing of the cushat. It was a religion to breathe the air of such surroundings; a philosophy to mark the tender green of Springtime, the fecundity of Summer, the ripeness of Autumn, the naked tragedy of Winter; a poesy to note the psalming of the lark, the wailing of the curlew, the battle-cry of the cock-grouse. Such it was to be born in the borderland of Scotland. Cheviot and Lammermoor, Ettrick and Teviotdale, Yarrow and Annandale, Gala Water and the Tweed, crooned their ballads of the Douglasses and the Percys, the Armstrongs and the Laidlaws—rieverers of Hawick and Jethart. Wist you I would have child of mine change that natural nursery for a room in a New York flat—a room filled with the insistent melancholy of the tragic symphony of a city? It rings in my ears as I write—on the basses, the gruff rumble of wagons; on the 'cellos, the light rattle of carriages; on the violins, the pitter-patter of countless feet—a curious pizzicato—on the drums, the roll of the elevated trains; on the trombones, the siren calls of the ferries. To the oboes has been left the *leit-motif*. It forces its way ever and anon through the mass of sound—imperative and exigent—the gong of the ambulance-wagon. For pain, shrill and clamant, low-pitched and long-suffering, after all, is the dominant theme of this music of the city. God, can home anywhere exist without hearing of such a Devil's Serenade?

Yet have I spent happy days and glorious nights in the city. The London that I love is no mighty metropolis. It is contained within a

group of stately courts, and dark, mysterious alleyways. It may be compassed in a brief hour's walk on a Sunday afternoon, or in the God-given birth hour of the morning. It is a region of strange memories, of sacred associations, of hallowed friendships. It has lodged within its boundaries more of the world's Immortals than has any similar space upon the earth's surface. It rests to-day, as it rested six hundred years ago, by the banks of the whirling world flood, unheeding, undisturbed—a sanctuary for men of thought in successive centuries of action. Here, in the vacated rooms of a world-regretted poet, I made my London home. The days drifted by very placidly in the court at the foot of the stairs. They ebbed with scarce a ripple, barely an eddy, to remind one of the death of the Past, the birth of the Possible. Out in the street, a sparrow's flight distant, they seethed as a mill race, hurling themselves against the incidents that later we called history, carrying in their arms the great and the honored of the earth, pressing ever madly onward to their eternity, the Unknowable. From my eyrie, in the old, wainscoted chambers at the head of the stairway, I marked much that was passing in the main channel. And I felt myself at home.

They were dear to me, those ancient rooms at the top of uncountable stairs, in the heart of that mountainous region whose highest peak is the clock-tower of the law courts, whose northern boundary is Holborn, whose equator is Fleet street, and whose southern steppes are intersected by curious, impetuous roadways that run rapidly down steep places to the Embankment. The inhabitants of this stretch of territory are, for the most part, men of intellect, men learned in the law, makers of books, writers of the saner parts of newspapers. They are, almost to a man, old acquaintances of yours. You have conversed with them, lived with them, shared strange adventures with them. In the magazines, and in books, you have studied their most private

thoughts, their most cherished opinions, their innermost convictions. In their works, they stand more openly confessed than ever have done your friends of the flesh. They form men's opinions, guide their destinies, tabulate their laws. Their advice is sought and followed. Yet, the great mass of the public knows not the name of one of them. They are citizens of the great Republic of Anonymity.

The man whose chambers marched with mine, whose squeaky boots I followed with exquisite pain each time he traversed the floor, has a name emblazoned on his door I never heard before. Yet is he one of my oldest friends. I learned by merest chance that he it was who had talked to me each month for years through the pages of a review I respect, who had taught me to recognize and to appreciate the works of the masters. It was hard to reconcile the man who had spoken so softly to me of Beethoven, of Schubert, of Schumann, with my neighbor of the discordant, Wagnerian boots. Yet were these twain one.

The frivolous accents of the comic opera, that rose to me through the flooring, were evoked from a stuttering mandolin by one whose far-sighted views of foreign affairs had earned my admiration. I saw a man groping after the milk through his miserly-opened oak in the morning. Before mid-day, he had saved a fellow-creature's honor in a court of law. Such close proximity to the men of brains robbed me of many old friends, but it brought me others—not the gods my imagination had painted, but good fellows with a taste for whiskey, and an enviable knowledge of cigars.

There are other inhabitants of my London—ghosts of the great dead. With them, I have walked many a moonlit night in the Temple courts and passageways. Chaucer abode there when there was naught but fat meadows, orchards, and the tilting-fields of the Knights Templars, to obscure his view of Westminster. He it was who thrashed a mendicant friar in Fleet street, and was fined for the diversion.

Gower, too, dwelt in my London, and Shakespeare there produced his "Twelfth Night," under the hammer beams of the Middle Temple Hall. Beaumont, of Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Harry Fielding, Sir Walter Raleigh, Wycherley, Congreve, John Ford, Spenser—all had lived in my London; and their shades kept me company, the while the great metropolis slept. There is, in the comradeship of such men, a joy that one's friends of the world cannot give. They are quick to sympathize with the mood of the moment, never obtrusive, generally helpful. It is for that reason I wandered most frequently to the Fountain Court that Oliver Goldsmith looked upon. Beside that fountain, after midnight had been tolled solemnly from St. Paul's, despairingly from St. Sepulchre's, hopefully from St. Clement le Dane's, I communed with most of those who, being dead, yet speak. At that ghost hour, the fountain sang more plaintively, more reflectively, than in that sunshine hour of Charles Dickens, when it "sparkled in the sun, and laughingly its liquid music played, and merrily the idle drops of water danced and danced, and, peeping out in sport among the trees, plunged lightly down again to hide themselves." There one met and learned from happy, penniless Noll, from his friends, Sir Joshua and Edmund Burke and Boswell. Occasionally, Dr. Samuel Johnson, snuffy in his suit of brown, with his black wig awry, and his stockings sluttishly about his ankles, broke ponderously upon our conference. The Scotsman in me stomached him but ill; and his appearance was the customary signal for my departure. On such occasions, I visited the site of Oliver's one-time rooms, in No. 2, Brick Court, and there mused with savage satisfaction upon the generous love of those old women, to whom he owed money, who sat weeping bitterly upon the stairs, "when they heard that the greatest and most generous of all men was dead within the black oak door." I had rather earn such a requiem than listen to all the

fulsome laudation Samuel Johnson received in his lifetime.

The melancholy Cowper was a citizen of my London; as also Charles Lamb, swilling toddy and concocting quaint conceits in his rooms in Mitre Court—watching “the white sails glide by the bottom of King’s Bench Walk as I lie in bed . . . without much wrying my neck.”

I fear to weary you with too much talk of my London home, but the belief that my friends there have been your friends in the wider world, emboldens me in my gossiping. I might lead you to the corner where Pope lived and wrote, but he has never been true friend of mine, as were the tenants of No. 10, Crown Office Row—Thackeray and Tom Taylor. Thackeray came very often to me in Fountain Court, walked with me on clear, moonlit nights, past the homes of the Immortals, past the graves of the Knights Templars; recalled, as Dickens recalled, the fierce days when the Temple Church was sanctuary for all the rogues and vagabonds of Alsatia; reconstructed the Temple of Chaucer’s time, its orchards and its meadows, its tilting grounds and its marshes; forgave the treasurers their vandal restorations, and grew tender even over the great chancellors—the bloody Jeffreys, the Norths, the Eldons, the Plowdens, the Clarendons, the Thurstons, the Jekylls—who ate their dinners in this gentle mind’s acre of busy London. Thackeray agreed with me, however, that the Temple was of greater interest because of its literary atmosphere than because of its legal luminescence. You remember his comment in “Pendennis”?—“I don’t know whether the student of law permits himself the refreshment of enthusiasm, or indulges in poetical reminiscences, as he passes by historical chambers; but the man of letters can’t but love the place which has been inhabited by so many of his brethren, or peopled by their creations, as real to us at this day as the authors whose children they were—and Sir Roger de Coverley, walking in the Temple

Garden, and discoursing with Mr. Spectator about the beauties in hoops and patches who are sauntering over the grass, is just as lively a figure to me as old Samuel Johnson rolling through the fog with the Scotch gentleman at his heels, on their way to Dr. Goldsmith’s chambers in Brick Court; or Harry Fielding, with inked ruffles and a wet towel round his head, dashing off articles at midnight for the *Covent Garden Journal*, while the printer’s boy is asleep in the passage.”

With him, and the other Immortals, I, too, have walked, and thought, and blessed the Temple. It rests on a space of ground not three blocks square, but it contains more of the air of home than does any spreading estate I elsewhere have encountered. I am loth to drag myself away from its contemplation; but I would fain lead you to other homes I have occupied. Would to God they all had been equally congenial!

Least homelike of all my resting-places was Johannesburg of the old days—the Johannesburg of conscienceless men and impure women, of gambling hells and drug-dispensing canteens, of typhoid and pneumonia. I lay ill there, ill of a climatic fever, in a bare room, devoid of ornament, with a jagged hole in the plaster at my bedside, out of which a gray rat intermittently eyed me. The room was filled with an infernal light from a scarlet blind slung diagonally across the window. Up the panes, and down the panes, buzzed an interminable army of flies; and I rolled on my bed, and prayed for home. One scene etched itself into my brain in these sweltering days of semi-delirium that never since has been effaced. It was of the finding of my fever-burned body by my Zulu servant in the morning. I was known to no one, my belongings were his perquisites, my end would be the fate of hundreds in that kiln-dried hell upon the Rand—a jangling of keys; an opening of the door; an entering of the barefooted Kafir boy; a cloud of great, green

flies; a gray rat loping sullenly to its hole in the plaster; a hurried seizure of all things gaudy; an apathetic dumping of a shapeless thing rolled in a soiled sheet of frayed cotton into a chance hole in the veldt before the doorway; the homecoming of a drift piece of humanity. I have known what it is to be homeless—homeless in the devil's own cockpit.

It is not in South Africa alone I have burned with fever. I have suffered even more severely in Egypt, but there I never felt so utterly a derelict. The East is a leisurely place, jealous of its beauties, slow to give up its secrets. Not all of Egypt can be seen from the piazza of Shepheard's and the deck of a Nile tourist steamer. A thousand years are as a watch in the night in the Orient; and one must woo long and diligently if she be won to yield aught of her mysteries. One has not known the East till the checkered morning light has waked him through the meshes of a native's latticed window. One has not seen the East till he has peered at his first waking upon some cool and silent courtyard, remote as Elysium from the hotel vestibule. One has not felt the mystery of the East till he has lain upon the hot sand of the desert at night time, listening to the bubbling of the Bisharin, the droning of the camel men. One has not understood the East till he has loved in the East—not a belle of the hotel ball-room, not a dancing-girl, but a Rebekah coming from the well, the proper genie of the Orient.

In Egypt, there are pyramids and sphinxes; in Algeria, mosques and minarets; in Morocco, palaces and slave-markets. These are for the others, for the weary globe-trotters, who, by reason of much gazing at the tops of steeples, miss the very essence of the East strewn at their feet. Without that essence, there can be no feeling of home in the East. Yet, even in Cairo—modern, theatre-going, afternoon-calling, five-o'clock-tea Cairo, the Mecca of the personally conducted tourist, one can find the Orient

of one's dreams. For us, there is a waiting *arabeyah* and a drive—rapidly past the hotels, vast hostleries of brick and stucco, vulgar insults flung in the teeth of the Pharaohs; with dignity past the carriages of the pashas' ladies; slowly past the kiosks of the harems in the palaces of the Khedival princes—almost to the Nile. A sharp turn to the left, and there, among the great houses of residential Cairo, through a Moorish arch into a marble court, fragrant with myrtle, are home and rest—such rest as Allah gives nowhere west of Suez.

And yet would I not ungratefully forget other resting-places between the Red Sea and the Atlantic—Tunis, with its glorious, almond-eyed women of Israel; Algiers, with its terraced hills, its nestling villas, its lapis-lazuli foreground; Tangiers, the barbaric, with its gleaming houses, its olive trees and its date palms. As you and I sail away from it, once more westward, the words of the Arabic saying are in our mouths: "I brought you good will and a blessing; I carry back a blessing and good will. *Salaam aleyk!* Peace be with you!"

Once more westward! Three thousand miles of travel, till again the jagged sky-line of Broadway juts above the horizon, and here, in God's Own Country, is the home of one's manhood. From the moment one sets foot on the wooden wharf, one realizes the mission of New York. It is not a pleasure garden, as is Paris; a clearing house, as is London; a barracks, as is Berlin; a lotus land, as is the Orient. It is a home for the man of purpose, a fitting field for his best endeavor—a battle ground for men in their prime.

Daudet's *Divonne* says, "pointing with her fist toward the enemy that the province burdens with all its wrath, 'Oh, that Paris, that Paris!—what we give you, and what you return to us!'" The province gives to Paris its blood and its gold, receiving in return bags of bones sucked dry of blood, destitute of means of sustenance. The states give to New

York of the best of their brain and their enterprise, receiving back again men famous and fortune-filled. New York is no vampire, but for long I believed it could never be a house-mother. Nor was it so till I looked in

the eyes of a Woman, and read there God's welcome. Romeo, listening to the voice of Juliet, cried: "It is my soul that calls upon my name!" I listened, and I understood—my home was indeed in God's Own Country.



THE BRIDE ROSE

PALE bridal rose, as perfect as my Dear,
 Pure as her thoughts, and as her body tender,
 When she shall clasp you, when she holds you near,
 Bid her believe that there is naught of fear,
 Naught of regret, in love's supreme surrender.

White is her heart's dear heaven; and thou, so white,
 Resting so near, dear rose, shalt be its warder;
 Close thou the way to all that could affright,
 Open the door to Love alone to-night—
 And unto me—for Love and I will guard her.

CHARLES BUXTON GOING.



HELPING HANDS

"ONE good turn deserves another," said the manager; whereupon the vaudeville artiste replied to the encore.



TEMPTING FATE

LONG years ago, he loved a maid, with passion deep, intense;
 But, for his sighs of love, she gave but sorry recompense.
 She promised she would wed him soon, but, oh, alas! alack!
 Just when he felt quite sure of her, she took her promise back.

He tried his false love to forget, called to his aid his pride,
 But vain were all his efforts, and once more for her he tried;
 And, when he vowed he loved her still, why, oh, alas! alack!
 She yielded to his pleading—and, at last, she took him back.

J. J. O'CONNELL.

THE ILLUSION OF FOOLS

By H. A. Keays

"Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part."

SHE rose suddenly, and moved restlessly about the long, white drawing-room; she could bear no longer the unwavering scrutiny of his eyes. A half-blown rose in a slender vase, drooping on its long stem, stirred her to strange resentment. She shook it free from the buds surrounding it, and pulled ruthlessly at its perfumed petals. Then, walking back to the fire, which, with its ruddy blaze, mellowed the evening chill, she dropped the petals slowly, one by one, into the flame's devouring depths. This done, she turned, and, with a charmingly defiant lift of her chin, looked at him. She found in his eyes the inevitable, the intolerable gleam she knew so well.

"It all looks so strange to me," she remarked, in careful, casual tones, as she took her seat again. "I can't really believe that I am at home. Oh, yes, I had the usual delightful Summer; the sort, you know, that everybody always has abroad—after they've reached home. We came back through England, and, to please Aunt Elsa, 'did' the cathedrals. Why, we actually stayed a week at Wells. Absurd, wasn't it? But, you see, it is the most characteristic cathedral town in England—that's Baedeker, please!—and, for a whole week, dear auntie just wallowed in 'atmosphere.' Oh, the cathedral is lovely, of course; if only it wasn't so new looking, inside—except the clock, the dear, ridiculous old clock. Aunt Elsa couldn't imagine why I should always sit in a particular seat in the choir, at afternoon service.

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It was because, through one of the arches, I could just see the old fellow's white legs striking the time, and the simplicity of the action formed such a pleasing contrast to the form and ceremony which were smothering me. Oh, no, he's not alive; he's just a figure dressed in the Charles-period costume. But what a relief he was to the drudgery of the day's piety! Then, Aunt Elsa found out, and called me a godless girl." So she chattered, avoiding the look of the man opposite.

Presently, however, he leaned toward her, and said, in his cool voice, "Wait a moment." And, holding his cigar between delicate, artistic fingers, he eyed her, deliberately.

The hot color flamed into her face. "Ah, don't!" she cried, as if his gaze hurt. "I'm not a specimen."

"Oh, yes, you are," he rejoined, calmly. "But what has happened? You are different."

"Different? I? Oh, no! And yet, perhaps, I am different. You see—" She hesitated, bending over the fire, and taking up a dainty bronze poker, with vicious intent.

The allurements of her slender grace disclosed itself anew to him in her unstudied pose. "Rare human bric-à-brac this," he thought; and he smiled to himself. Then, "Don't!" he said, unhurriedly. "Is the impulse to poke irresistible? Seek to quell it. That fire is too good to spoil."

She hardly heard him. "You see, it's like this," she began, and the poker slipped unheeded from her grasp; "yes, there is a difference, but I—oh, I'm quite the same. It's only—only—" in the shock of the moment,

she looked full at him—"I'm going to be married—soon."

Was the room silent for only a moment—or for what eternity? Then, "Are you?" he said, quietly. "Well?"

She laughed, but the note was too light. "Aunt Elsa's so pleased! Every one is pleased. It—it—happened at Wells, in the palace garden. There's a walk there, with a beautiful view toward the cathedral and the open country. They call it Bishop Ken's Walk, because he wrote, 'Awake, my Soul,' and that kind of thing, there—before breakfast, I believe. Don't people like him always write that kind of thing before breakfast?"

And, grown nervous beyond her control, she looked again at him. Then, she quivered beneath his watching eyes, and the slight, cynical twist upon his lip, that she knew so well, and feared so much.

But she nerved herself against him, and went on: "Until then, I hadn't thought of marrying him—not seriously." He smiled, slightly, the smile of a connoisseur in the ways of a woman. It stung her. "Of course, you don't believe me. But, truly, I wasn't thinking of anything like that, then. I was merely happy in the lovely day and the beauty everywhere, and, somehow, it touched me—absurd, wasn't it?—the story of that old bishop and his strenuous hymn. Do you know the hymn?"

She repeated it, a thrill in her voice which she could not conquer.

"'Redeem thy misspent time that's past,
And live this day as if thy last.'

It's pretty serious, isn't it? And this:

"'Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noon-day clear;
Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part.'

Oh, yes; I don't wonder you smile. It's almost incredible, isn't it? that I should be stirred by sentiments like these; but, you see, I was—for the moment. And then, just then—"the color fluttered into her face—"just then, this man asked me to be his wife."

She paused an instant; then she laughed lightly, sweetly, cynically. "It was the correct psychological moment, wasn't it?"

But the eyes of the man showed no appreciation of this fact. "Go on," he said, quietly.

"I mean to," she answered, with strange eyes upon him. "Of course, I had never intended to *marry* him. He had interested me as a specimen, just as I interest you. I analyzed him, as you have taught me to analyze everything in life. But, when that moment overwhelmed me, I—I accepted him—because I thought of—you!"

"Of me?" He laid down his cigar.

"Yes. It was like this." Her slender fingers gripped one another in cruel clasp. "Don't you see? He asked me in a beautiful, old-fashioned way—oh, in a way quite out of date. It struck me as so pathetic! And I said, 'Wait a moment.' I wanted time to think how to say, 'No.' But that hymn—the old lodge-keeper had repeated it to us only a moment before—that hymn labored with—what used they to call it?—my conscience. There, in the Bishop's Walk, with the great cathedral so close to us, and the spell of the vesper service still upon me, the rising and falling of that boy's voice among the arches, the magnificent roll of the organ—why, it was still playing, we could hear it all across that lovely old garden, and, you know, don't you, how an organ always affects me?—we've laughed at that so often—and—and—there was that man—and that hymn—

"'Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part.'

And, oh, it came over me so terribly, the longing to be good, and happy, and simple."

He was waiting, with eyes grown bitter, but still he smiled. For thus he had held her long.

But she drew herself up, with an air new to him; an air which carried a suggestion of criticism of himself, of detachment from his all-imperious in-

fluence. And, when she spoke, there was resistance—challenge, even—in her voice.

"I told you that I meant to say, 'No.' But I looked at the man, and there came over me an overwhelming realization of his sincerity; I felt sure that, when he asked me to be his wife, he really meant something, that it was not the mere ebb and flow of the moment's emotion. Why, it occurred to me that here was a man whom a woman could trust with her soul, if she couldn't take care of it herself. Yes, of course, this shocks you; you never expected such drivel from me. But there's something in it. Don't you think, after all, that there may be a few things in life that you don't quite—quite understand?"

"Yes, there's you," he answered, coldly.

"Ah, what a discovery for you!"

He rose. "You're not amusing to-night."

"No. But I shall be, if you will only wait a little. Please don't go."

He looked at her, steadily. "Do you actually mean to marry this man, then?" he asked, slowly.

"I do," she answered, unflinchingly.

Their meeting eyes flashed fire, and, for a moment, there was silence. Then, "I could never have believed such a thing of you," he said. "Why, child, child, you haven't a vestige of—love—love—for him."

"Love?" she echoed. "What is that?"

"The illusion of fools," he answered, bitterly. "But I assure you that, if you intend to act the fool's part, you will need all the illusion that belongs to it. Marriage? Child, it's like nothing else. You don't dream what you're facing. That man—you say you could trust him with your soul!" He laughed, meditatively. "Child, how should you know that all men are alike, when it comes to some things? But they are, and some day you will appreciate this fact, and scoff at yourself—when you remember. You, of all women, to marry like this! Think of it! You will be tied to him, day

in and day out, month after month, year after year. You will have to identify yourself absolutely with his interests, his emotions—his emotions, remember. You think that he is a gentleman, a term that women seem to idolize; has it never occurred to you to wonder how many men remain what you mean by it to their wives? Believe me, a man goes to the altar one sort of fool, but he turns from it quite another."

"Yes, I suppose so." She looked at him with clear eyes. "I think I understand that better than you realize."

"Why, child, marriage is—is——"

"I know," she said, proudly. "It's—it's—brutal!"—the word broke from her with almost a sob—"unless—unless——"

He looked at her with eyes that scorched.

But, for the moment, she was not thinking of him. Her darting imagination pictured herself, robbed of her cloistered peace and purity, of all the personal loneliness so dear to her pride.

"And yet—" her tender lip grew hard—"marriage is an honorable estate, instituted of God."

"I don't understand you," he said, heavily.

"Don't you?" She spoke wearily. "Do men ever understand women? or women, men, for that matter? No, no; between them there is a great gulf fixed."

He studied her for a moment. "The question is—will you—will you—after all?"

"Oh, yes; I will, I will!" she exclaimed, in tumult, her color brilliant, her breath riotous. "Do you think I would break my word to him? Why, he believes in me—in me—with the same kind of terrible faith with which he believes in honor and in God. He's full of sentiment. You say that all men are alike when it comes to some things; they are alike when it comes to sentiment. They reek with it. But this I've only discovered lately. Women have hardly any sen-

timent. Why, I wonder!" And she mused, resting her chin on her delicate, high-bred hand.

"I know why," he said, "but I shall not tell you."

"Well, I should rather not know," she gave him honest answer. "That explanation would run deep, and I've stopped thinking, you see; stopped for good and all."

She was silent again, until her lip trembled beneath the sting of some bitter thought. "Oh, but life is too hard!" she exclaimed, as if the admission were wrong from her. "Think of it! I shall have to live up to his ideals. You think I can't?" She held herself proudly. "He shall never lose one ideal through me. You think I shall not succeed in making him happy? What did you say? That you were not worrying about his—his—happiness? Happy? Oh, I shall make him *happy*." Her gesture was beneficent. "Have you never suspected that I'm the sort of stuff that martyrs at the stake are made of? You know, don't you, what sweet little ways I have?" She laughed, softly, but without joy. "They will be all for him. What? Ah! I'm sorry you said that."

"And the cost of it all—to you?" he suggested, after a long pause; "you've counted that?"

"The cost?" She paled, shivering. "Ah, yes! There's always a score to settle sometime, isn't there?—even for happiness. It seems to me I'm paying a great deal of score in advance, though." Her breath came shorter. "Why, think! When I get his letters, they affect me like an illness. Just before you came, I took his last one, and buried it deep in the fire. That was wrong, because it was a great letter. There were tears in my eyes as I read it, and wished that I could love the writer. Did you ever write love-letters to a woman you had idealized?" She scrutinized him, recklessly. "Yes, once you did. How fearful for a man to outlive his ideals! But this man never shall. Yet, I burned his letter, and wished that

my own soul was shriveling in its flame."

"Tell me! What is the matter?" he asked, his voice tender, his eyes compelling.

The red color suffused her face, and the quiver of her hands betrayed her. For this was the imperious sweetness she feared. Ah, she must get farther away from him. She must have air, space; a gulf must yawn between him and her. She stepped far back.

His eyes had grown determined. "You *can't* marry this man," he said, resolutely. "What sudden frenzy is this? It's not like you. You're not a fool."

"No?" she asked, with sweet upward inflection.

"No, you're not. But, just now, you're acting like one. The only question is, why?"

"I'm going to tell you," she said, looking at him curiously. "I said I would amuse you. I will." She was still a moment, struggling to quell her insurgent heart. Then, "I want to tell you all about it. And, afterward, when I'm gone, far out of your life, you can remember and analyze the emotions that I revealed to you. You can label them, 'Just One More Woman,' and lay them away among your specimens."

"Listen!" he commanded. "Are you quite sure that you're just to me?"

"Just!" she echoed, scornfully. "In Paris, I saw your wife, and, as I looked at her, I seemed to become aware that there were some things I had been forgetting, some things that perhaps my ancestors, my stern old Puritan ancestors, would have been willing to die for—honor and truth and justice—those high qualities with their long-lived persistence in human affairs."

"But my wife—" he protested, and then he was proudly silent.

"Yes, but you call her wife," she said, calmly. "Nothing alters that. It is a great fact. And once—once you—loved her."

He made a gesture of revolt, vehemence in its despair. And he looked at the fair girl, white as an Annunciation lily—the girl who, all unconscious, had taken possession of his life, purifying, ennobling, inspiring it. “Once you loved her!” His soul sickened at the words. What should she know of that terrible love, the love that sees “what is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay!”

“Listen!” she leaned toward him, her eyes like stars, her face flushing like the dawn, all fleeting pink and pearl; her mouth trembling with the elusive, adorable charm, for which, from his dreams, he had awakened to find himself ahungered.

He stared at her, bewildered.

But to her the supreme moment had come, and her soul reached out to clutch it, eager for its pain, its bitter sweetness.

“Ah, I love you—love you—love you!” she said, in a note faint as a bird’s in the first of the gray morning. “I love you, but,” her voice changed, “I shall marry my—lover, because I can trust him, and I can no longer trust myself. Let me think!”

She held him far from her, with imperative hand. “Do you remember me as I was when you first met me, a fresh girl of twenty, with a heart full of dreams? And you took a fancy to me, didn’t you? I offered such a field for missionary effort, I was so choicely ignorant, so heathenish, if you like. I believed in everything I had been brought up to believe in—in God the Father Almighty, in love, and in the life everlasting. I said my prayers every night. Oh! I had a white soul then.” Her eyes grew tense with the dread of tears. “I thought the world was a beautiful place. This is what I was when into my life you came—you!”

“It was a great thing, wasn’t it? for a little girl like me to be noticed by a man like you. You had been a figure in my imagination long, long before I met you. Uncle Reg was

always talking about you, and what he didn’t tell me, the newspapers did. I knew where you were born, how old you were, how you got your education, when you first ran for Congress, and why you weren’t elected. I knew the color of your eyes, and the name of the woman you married. I knew why she married you; I knew she preferred living in Paris. Oh, don’t you see that you were a hero to me—a hero like Hercules and Napoleon and Caesar?

“This is what you were to me when you came into my life, and took it by storm. You found me charming, though I never thought of that, then; I was too simple-minded. It was, of course, just that—my innocence, my naïveté, that appealed to you, like the perfume of the wood buds in Spring.

“Think of it!” she stormed toward him. “In a little while, I loved you, so that I prayed for you every night, kneeling by my window, and looking up at the stars where my mother had taught me that God dwells. God!”—she laughed, scornfully—“how soon you taught me to deny Him! Once, this Summer, in Mainz, I went into the cathedral, driven there by the despair, the agony, of my longing for you. I hungered that day for faith, and I thought, ‘There, in that church, they still believe something.’ It comforted me to think that the vast Roman Catholic organization existed and persisted upon a basis of belief. Oh, yes, of course, I know it doesn’t; but have you never grasped something of what religion means to a woman? Have you never realized why it means so much to her? Have you never thought what will happen when women no longer believe, when they, too, question the fact of a hereafter, when *their* creed becomes: ‘Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die’?

“No! Don’t dare to speak to me now. You’ve talked to me for years, and I’ve listened. To-night, you must listen to me. You see, there are only two great theories of life, aren’t

there? The one: 'Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die;' the other:

"'Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part.'

"It was this one that my mother believed in. It was this one that she held to, when, one evening, they brought my father home to her, dead, crushed out of all resemblance to the lover who had kissed her good-bye that same morning. Don't you see? When she is face to face with the great agonies of life, it is of no avail to a woman to know that she knows nothing—that she is a philosopher, forsooth! Religion, even the poorest religion, has been to the women of all ages as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We know, of course, you and I, that the rock was a delusion, the creation of their too vivid imaginations; but weren't they blest in believing themselves cool beneath its shadow? Is it better to know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and to be left of imagination?"

"Christine!" he breathed.

She flushed deeply. In all the years of their strange intimacy, he had never called her by name until now. Yet once, not long ago, the thought that her name was upon his lips had sent her happy to sleep in the brooding, lonely night.

"That Saturday in Mainz," she continued, ignoring her beating heart, "was market-day. The peasants, carrying their baskets, came into the cathedral, said a prayer, and went away; to sell and haggle as before, perhaps, and yet, perhaps, a little differently. They came and went—such throngs of them. On his knees beside me, there was a young mechanic. I shall remember his face all my life, it was so fine and strong and nobly devout!

"But my training held. I remembered then, even as I watched this man, the superiority of the knowledge that I owed to you, and I went out of the cathedral with a curse on my lips. Then, suddenly, it occurred to me that a curse presupposes God or the

devil, it doesn't matter which, and I laughed."

For a moment, she paused in her swift speech, but, frightened by the smoldering fire in his eyes, she hurried on.

"Was it fair? Oh, how could you? Think of the years that you've played with me, that I've been to you just a toy, a bauble fitted with an expensive attachment called a soul, whose wheels it has amused you to whirl. And how I've loved you—*loved* you!" She caressed the word on lips that lingered. "I've sat here, night after night, hungering for your nearing step—I should have known it among a thousand—and I've stood there in the window, after you had gone, listening to your footfalls as they grew fainter and fainter in the silent street, hiding in my heart a pain greater than I knew how to bear. Your farewell was always a prophecy to me of the long, last farewell, the day drawing ever nearer and nearer, when you must go out of my life forever. It was like the agony of death to me—like watching the light of a beloved life flickering out into the darkness of eternal night.

"And afterward, ah, often, often, I have awakened to find no more sleep, because my heart was desolate; and I have slipped down-stairs in the deeps of the midnight darkness, the blessed darkness, and wrapped myself close in these draperies"—she touched the heavy hangings—"because they held for me—what?—just the fragrance of your cigar." She smiled at him. "Pitiful, wasn't it? But, do you know that then the great, white room would seem to me a universe that enfolded just your spirit and mine? Why, I have stood here long in the darkness, and held this"—and again she laid a tender, reminiscent touch upon the heavy folds—"tight in my covetous fingers, that I might carry back with me to sleep the perfume that seemed a breath of you.

"No, no! You mustn't speak to me now. You think that I would *let* you speak to me after I have told you how I have loved you? You see, I just

wanted you to know how a woman can suffer, how she *can* love—when she knows how. You will remember it always, won't you?"

For a moment, she faltered; then:

"What? You say that I have misunderstood you, that your self-control has counted for nothing with me, that you— Ah," her eyes flamed upon him, "you should have told me all that *never*—or—sooner!"

But, the next moment, she smiled at him. "Wasn't it like a woman to say that?" Yet, her lips quivered, pitifully. "Isn't it strange to think that we've come to the end?"

"Christine!"

"No, no!" she cried, strong again. "Think of it! All these years, I have been clay in your, the potter's, hands.

You have made of me what you would. Are you proud of your masterpiece?"

Speechless, he looked at her.

"Yes, you must go now," she said, in a voice suddenly grown strangely sweet. "You must go out of my life, forever; because, you see, I am still clay, and you are still—a potter. Good-bye, for the last time—the last, long time that I've waited for."

Alone, she sat there through the slow, dense hours that shrank from the dawn; alone with that faint perfume, growing ever fainter, dying as his footsteps had died upon the deep of night.

Once, she whispered, wondering:

"Good-bye? Did I say good-bye—to him? Oh, yes; I said—good-bye."



THE ACCIDENTAL DARLING

THE wind was in the south.

Life meant to make a rose,

But—how, nobody knows—

It proved to be a mouth.

Life stared, went on creating,

Beauty to beauty mating—

Brow and eye and so forth sweet,

And—*longo intervallo*—feet.

Now, she had set the snare

Of fetching, yellow hair,

And keyed to the right note

The darling, white bird-throat,

Molded the oval breast

And shoulders and the rest;

But there was one thing still—

It called for all her skill.

She didn't plan it, at the start;

Besides, a sticker is the heart.

She stood a time—laughed in her sleeve, no doubt,

Then, struck her master stroke: she left it out!

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.



"WHO was the world's greatest financier?"

"Noah. When the whole world went into liquidation, he had no trouble in floating his stock."

THE CRISIS

With a few apologies to Mr. Winston Churchill

STEPHEN BRICE, overcome by the incense of Virginia Carvel's presence, drew her to him until her heart beat against his own. She did not resist, but lifted her face to his—it was not heavy now—and he kissed her.

"You love me, Virginia?" he cried.

"Yes, Stephen," she answered, low, more wonderful in her surrender than ever before; "yes, dear." Then, she hid her face against his blue coat, and he did not look for it, because he knew where it was. "I—I cannot help it. Oh, Stephen, how I have struggled against it! How I have tried to hate you, and couldn't! No, I couldn't. I have tried to insult you, and did insult you. And, when I saw how splendidly you bore it, I used to cry."

He kissed her brown hair. She had not hid that in his blue coat. "I loved you through it all," he said. "Virginia?"

"Yes, dearest."

"Virginia, did you dream of me?"

She raised her head quickly, and awe was in her eyes. "How did you know?"

"Because I dreamed of you," he answered. "And those dreams used to linger with me half the day as I went about my work."

"And the other half?" she asked, with a little, jealous smile.

"The other half also," he confessed.

She believed him. "I, too, treasured them," she said. "And I hated myself for doing it."

"Virginia, will you marry me?"

It was not too sudden.

"Yes," she responded, promptly.

"To-morrow?"

"No."

"No?" Stephen Brice gasped. For five years, he had waited, and hoped, and lost hope, and struggled with fate; and, now, was the dallying delay to continue?

"No," she repeated, "not to-morrow, but to-day. The crisis is inevitable, and why should we postpone it further? Send a hurry call in to the nearest pastor, and——"

At this moment, President Lincoln, General Grant, General Sherman, Admiral Porter, Colonel Colfax, Eliphalet Hopper, Mr. Brinsmade, Lige Brent, Judge Whipple, and Uncle Comyn and Aunt Lillian entered the room. It was history!

"Well," remarked Mr. Lincoln, that quaint, quizzical smile irradiating his sad face with a glow of kindly delight.

Virginia was first to regain her equanimity. Women always are under such circumstances. "Oh, Mr. Lincoln," she cried, in rapture, "we are going to be married this very day!"

For an instant, the President stood smiling at their blushes—he to whom it was given to set aside his cares and troubles, and partake of the troubles of others. Then, he seemed to remember, and the old sadness came into his eyes—the ineffable sadness, the sadness and the woe of a whole world.

"And I thought the war was over," he said, slowly.

That was all.

WILLIAM J. LAMPTON.

A NEW YORK COURTSHIP

By Gertrude Lynch

As he walked briskly by the apartment-house in Harlem, and caught a glimpse of its name carved in massive letters above the portico, of the stands of artificial foliage, red carpet and brilliant frescoes, a sudden thought struck him. He would excuse himself early from his friend's house—almost as soon as the after-dinner cigar was finished—and drop into May Seamon's "at home." It was seldom that he got as far north as One-hundred-and-sixteenth street, and he really ought to show himself there occasionally. His mother and hers had been schoolmates, and May had been very good to him when he first came to New York, and knew nobody. It was certainly a lucky chance. Only two streets separated the house where he had promised to dine from "The Ethel," the apartment-house in question, and it would seem to her that he had come up-town purposely to see her—she need never know.

He did not believe in openly practising deceit, but subtlety was a different thing. It was not only something forgivable—it was something to be commended, and, in this instance, almost necessary; for May Seamon belonged to the class of women who take everything except neglect as a matter of course, and would never understand that, for a busy man who lived in Twenty-first street, to take a trip to Harlem to pay an evening call, was an almost unheard-of compliment.

Three hours later, he was ushered into the tiny suite of rooms where May Seamon held open house in an informal, semi-bohemian way for her friends and friends' friends, and where weak punch,

amateur music and elocution, superficial witticisms, hot air and lack of space accentuated the hospitality of an independent young woman whose days were spent in chasing "specials" for a Sunday newspaper.

He was greeted cordially, as he glanced about the room with the practised eye of the veteran taking stock of feminine possibilities; and, after a desultory chat with his hostess, he followed her to a cozy-corner made of bargain-counter draperies, wooden boxes and a mixture of Navajo handwork and Syrian deceits.

"Miss Beattie, Mr. Kenyon."

He acknowledged the introduction by a stare expressive of sudden amazement at Miss Beattie's beauty, then sank to the cushions at her side, only betraying the fear he had felt at their seeming insecurity by a look of relief when he found them perfectly safe and invitingly comfortable.

She met his gaze of unrestrained admiration by a vivacious movement, provocative and alluring.

He believed that he could rest an hour very pleasantly in that dim corner, with such a pretty girl to amuse him. He congratulated himself on the chance that had made it possible for him to kill two birds with one stone. He waited for her to open fire.

She twirled her fan. "I'm sure you're sorry you're here; you're looking at that girl over there in gray," she finally said.

Her tone was lively; the dimples in her cheeks, well-trained, emphasized every other word; her constantly recurring smile showed small teeth, even and dazzlingly white. He lost himself in

the mazes of a mental inquiry, whose intricacies he had traversed before. Did a girl who had dimples display them because she was naturally of a happy temperament and could not help it, or did their possession force her to an exaggerated cheerfulness, in order to make the best of a rare equipment? He answered her, however, as if he had no undercurrent of thought.

"Sorry? I wouldn't change places with the King of England, and I didn't know there was a girl in gray; in fact, I didn't know there was another girl in the room." He had put all the admiration of which he was capable in his initial glance, and could only duplicate it the second time.

His companion was apparently not analytic. "Of course, you'd say so. One can't believe all a man says," with a sigh.

"I should think not! I should be confoundedly sorry if you believed everything every man said; but I'm different, you know."

His tone was earnest; he had not practised that sort of compliment for many years without attaining a decided proficiency in its delivery.

"Different? How?"

He hedged, diplomatically. "I don't wish to run down my own sex, but you seldom meet a man who is as sincere as your present companion."

"Oh, they all say that!"

"All? Don't say 'all,' you hurt me. I wish to be the only one."

"Well, you shall be for five minutes; then, I am going to dance with Mr. Reynolds."

He looked at her reproachfully, but she was no novice in flirtation, and she met his glance, her eyes sparkling with amusement.

Their persiflage continued for a few minutes longer; then, the strains from a piano imbedded amid bric-à-brac and draperies in an adjoining room, invited to a *deux-temps*. He resisted the voiceless flatteries of several young women, held his post relentlessly, and was rewarded by having Miss Beattie return to him, wearied in body, but still alert in mind.

While she had been indulging in the lively evolutions of the two-step, he remembered that it was customary for the young men frequenting Miss Seamon's evenings at home to escort any of her feminine guests, who arrived alone, to their respective homes. He had thought that unwritten rule a bore in the past; now, he welcomed it as an opportunity for further enjoyment. He hoped that Miss Beattie was unattended. He could not do himself justice, or enjoy her chatter, when they were interrupted every other minute. He recalled that the moon was at the full. He decided that a walk home with her on his arm would not be a bad ending to a pleasant evening, nor a bad beginning to a future acquaintance. He should insist upon her walking; a trolley-car would be as little conducive to mutual understanding as Miss Seamon's crowded rooms.

At this crisis of his thoughts, his hostess passed. He stopped her. "Has—er—Miss Beattie an escort home?"

Miss Seamon hesitated, and looked at him, reflectively. Then, she said, slowly: "No. She came this afternoon, just before dinner, and——"

He interrupted, eagerly. "If I can be of any use to you in the matter, command me."

He thought that was rather neat for an impromptu—putting it as a favor to her; and she apparently fell into the trap.

"I'm awfully obliged. It wears the gray matter out to see that all my girls get home safely. I was going to keep her all night, but I had already asked Jennie Courtlandt, and I didn't see how I could put any one else up."

"How could you think of inconveniencing yourself, when I am here? You know I am always only too happy to be put to some use. I'm a lazy beggar, but you ought to know me well enough to feel that I am at your service whenever you need me."

His tone was equally divided between reproach and wounded sensibilities.

"Very well; you won't disappoint me?"

"Disappoint you?" His eyes said, "How can you be so unfeeling?"

She smiled, understandingly. "Forgive me, but you know men are fickle, and you might meet a girl you liked better, before the evening is over."

"Impossible! I mean, it is not so much the girl as the chance to do *you* a favor."

She smiled again, and passed on. He saw her, a moment later, interrupt the dance of Miss Beattie and her partner, while she whispered something to the girl. He could guess what it was without any great effort of the imagination, for they both looked toward him, and Miss Beattie clapped her hands in gleeful unrestraint, as she returned to him, breathless and happy. "You have kept my place all this time? How good of you!"

She sat by his side again, and recommenced her stimulating small-talk, which entertained him so thoroughly, relieving him of all mental effort. Anecdotes, repartee, provocations fell from her lips in ceaseless flow. He listened, playing with her fan, silent and happy.

Having scored a point, he could afford to be generous. A girl in pink with black hair, *à la Mérode*, had been making eyes at him over a man's shoulder for five minutes.

He arose. "I know every man in the room hates me, and I must be generous to my rivals; particularly," he ended, with heavy humor, "as I can well afford it, for your hostess has promised that I may see you home."

"You are sure you wish to? I am a great trouble." The smile and dimples came at the same time, with the harmony of long companionship.

"Trouble? Well, maybe; but some troubles, you know, are more worth while than blessings."

He retreated, then, conscious of the opportunity later on, and having the masculine horror of making his attentions too pronounced, for fear of future complications.

The rest of the evening passed somehow; he devoted himself first to one girl, then another, finding solace in ardent glances across the rooms, in Miss Beattie's direction, some of which reached their destination; some of which fell by the way.

He was putting on his coat in the hall, when a man he knew slightly, Van Vlaeck by name, slapped him on the back.

"So you are the victim this time?"

"Victim?" He turned, stiffly. "I don't understand you." His tone was not inviting; in it, a sensitive soul might read that he considered the slap on the back and the question equally impertinent.

Apparently, Van Vlaeck had not a sensitive soul.

"I call it being victimized to see a girl home from Harlem, when she lives at Bensonhurst."

Bensonhurst! He felt cold chills run up and down his spine. He had certainly heard of the place. He had just finished reading Peary's adventures; was it in any way connected with that chronicle of hardship?

He shook himself free from the horror of the suggestion, and listened to Van Vlaeck's explanations.

"I got back in time for breakfast, old man, the time I went. You will, if you're lucky about the cars."

Bensonhurst! Oh, yes; now he remembered; it was somewhere on Long Island.

Van Vlaeck saw the bewilderment in his face, and went on, mercilessly: "Don't know the way? There's not much choice among bad apples, you know. She'll pilot you. You take the elevated road to Park place, cross the square, take Bridge cars, change on the other side—I've forgotten the name of the line—ride for an hour and a half, land in a field, walk five country blocks, and then wait an hour for the return car. By-bye, old man! She *is* deucedly pretty!"

He braced himself against the radiator, while he thought the matter out.

BENSONHURST! His mind worked in small capitals. What a fool he had been, when pretty girls were as plentiful as yellow-journal extras! At his age, and with his experience, to commit such a blunder! Bensonhurst! Talk about the heroes of San Juan Hill—what was that reckless charge to this? Yet, they were lauded, while he would go to his grave, unhonored and unsung.

He set his teeth. He would never betray the fact that he had been "taken in." No one should ever find out. The poor girl was surely not to blame for living at the extreme limit of civilization; it was a misfortune, like having a glass eye or a wooden arm, and, like those physical ills, could not be lived down; but he would not visit his wrath upon her, even in his mind. He had some sense of justice. She supposed, naturally, that Miss Seamon had told him. He remembered the peculiar gleam in Miss Seamon's brown orbs. He also remembered that a girl had told him once that May Seamon was "catty." He had supposed then that the girl was jealous. Catty! It certainly was a catty trick. Well, it simply meant that a night was blotted from the calendar of his life—long, useless hours leading nowhere; that was all, for, of course, a future acquaintance was now impossible. However, he would not betray that decision to her; he would let her enjoy herself while she could. But he was determined simply to drop out of her existence—an easy thing to do, when miles of interlacing trolley-lines, bridges and open country separated them.

He had himself well in hand when he joined her.

She looked charmingly coquettish in her furs and rose-trimmed hat, and, putting away from him the thought of his lonely ride home in the early morning hours, he threw more than his usual fervor into his manner, saying good night to his hostess with a look of gratitude, as if she had conferred upon him the supreme blessing of his life.

Miss Beattie's vivacity withstood even the test of the constant change of cars, the long ride and the enervating, chilling air. He had often noted this extraordinary volubility of the suburban woman, and remembered a scientific classmate of his at college, who evolved the theory that it was one of nature's compensations, like the fur of animals which live in extreme cold, or the protective resemblance of brown butterflies to the twigs on which they rest.

During the last half of the journey, he became somnolent, rousing himself once in a while, when the cars, flying through wind-swept spaces, lurched suddenly, to ejaculate, "You don't say so!" at her last remark, to make an allusion to the becomingness of her attire, or to laugh understandingly at a witty anecdote; then, to relapse into semi-consciousness, a state of which she apparently had no knowledge, as she narrated to him the innocent events of her daily life.

Van Vlaeck had not exaggerated the situation. Miss Beattie lived eight blocks from the cars, but the brisk walk restored Kenyon's circulation, and, true to the rôle of hero he had adopted, he left her with a lingering pressure of half-frozen fingers, a weakened stare of intense admiration and the wish that they meet again soon, with the unmistakable, if wordless, suggestion, that it would be her fault if they did not. He carefully refrained from binding himself, however, to a certain date.

His remembrance of the return was not vivid. After waiting what seemed an eternity for the car, he asked the conductor to awaken him at the proper place. There was a blockade on the Bridge; he dragged himself into the car at the other end, asked that conductor also to awaken him, and reached home in time for a cold plunge and a strong cup of coffee before going to business. He left the office early, came home, and tumbled into bed.

He thought of Miss Beattie several times in the following year, usually in

the half-hour preceding dinner, when he gave himself up to morbid reflection, and listed the misfortunes of his life. It was a long time before he became fully reconciled to the trick fate had played him in arousing his interest in a girl of such attractive personality, and then rendering further acquaintance impossible by circumstances entirely beyond his control.

Thirteen months after his adventure, he met her on Broadway. He could not recollect her name for a moment, but his glance of admiration duplicated the one with which he had emphasized their first meeting, and covered the blank of greeting while his mind evolved her from the chaos of many women to the isolation of the one.

"You have never been to see me," she criticized, smilingly, "and you promised."

He made the usual excuses—business at night, the crush of things, the hope that had sustained him until so long a time had elapsed that he was ashamed to put her memory to the test.

She listened, her dimples coming and going, and without any apparent suspicion of his integrity.

"Well, you must make amends. We have moved, and it will not take so long."

His face brightened, in spite of his self-control. "You have moved? Where?" His tone was eager enough to compensate for past neglect.

"We are right in the heart of things now," she responded, gaily; "Brooklyn."

Brooklyn! His expression changed, and he made heroic efforts by the aid of his gloved hand and mustache to remedy the facial betrayal.

"Yes, Brooklyn," she continued. "Isn't that fine? You cross the Bridge, take a Myrtle-avenue, or De Kalb-avenue, car, get off at Tompkins, and walk four blocks; if you forget the way, ask any of the conductors—they are awfully obliging over there. Now, what evening will you come?"

He felt bound to keep to the gait he had struck.

"Any evening," he responded. "I hope you will make it soon."

She took him at his word. "To-morrow evening?"

He bowed, with apparent delight, and the last words he said, as he put her on the car, were, "To-morrow evening, then."

She certainly was one of the brightest girls he had ever seen, and so clever and pretty! But Brooklyn!—what a misfortune!—not quite so bad as Bensonhurst, of course, but bad enough.

All the next day, a dark cloud seemed to envelop him; he felt as if impending misfortune were dogging his footsteps. A running accompaniment of mysterious words emphasized his thoughts. "Bridge cars; De Kalb or Myrtle; get off at Tompkins." He thought of the blockades which always took place on the Bridge, and finally, at five o'clock, the hour when the city inertia begins to settle down over the lower part of Manhattan, he braced himself to the inevitable, and sent her a telegram:

"Unexpected press of business keeps me down-town. Hope to see you soon."

The "soon" was eight months later.

He had strolled into the private view of the Water Color Exhibition. He habitually attended first-nights, for he knew a number of young women artists whom he was sure to meet there, and the pictures never bothered him particularly, for he had no strenuous ideas in regard to the different schools of expression.

He recognized her at once. She was standing in front of one of the popular pictures, discussing its merits with a companion. She was prettier than ever, and many admiring eyes were turned her way.

Just at that moment, he caught sight of Alger, a legal friend, who was alone, and who carried an overcoat over his arm.

Inspiration was not Kenyon's forte, but a happy thought came to his aid.

He hurried across the room, and, clutching Alger by the arm, said, entreatingly:

"Lend me your coat—that's a good

fellow. There's a girl here I've been dodging lately, and I've got to think of something new this time." And Alger relinquished the coat.

A moment later they met, and, with a dimpling smile of recognition, Miss Beattie introduced him to her brother, and then said, reproachfully:

"You never came to see me, after all."

He pointed to the black stripe on the sleeve of the borrowed coat.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" And her face grew quickly grave; then, after a pause, "Your wife, perhaps?"

"No, indeed!"—indignantly—"anesteemed relative; but I haven't felt much like gaiety since then. I'm just getting hold of myself."

"Then, do come and see me. I won't ask you to set an evening, this time—you business men are so uncertain. Just try your luck; you'll be sure of a welcome."

"Indeed, I'll come."

How charmingly she met his explanation! He repeated the shibboleth with which he had put himself to sleep for many months when insomnia claimed him: "Bridge cars; De Kalb or Myrtle; get off at Tompkins——"

"Oh, dear, no!" she interrupted; "we have moved. We are living in Ninety-third street." She extracted a card from a dainty case of lion-skin.

Ninety-third street! What luck!

The next evening found him there; ten days later, he called again; fifteen days after, he repeated his visit. She was not at home the last time, and he did not call again for a month. She managed, however, to intrude frequently into his reflections, and he repeated to himself many times a compliment which lacked originality, but gained strength by exercise, that she was certainly one of the brightest girls he had ever known.

One night, they went to the theatre, and, on the way home, he was unfortunate in getting stalled in a blockade. They had dawdled over their supper, and it was three o'clock before he reached his pillow.

"Such a confounded nuisance," was

his last waking thought, "that Ninety-third street is so far!" Miss Beattie lived on the West Side, too, and he lived on the East.

Mayday morning, he was looking out of his window, when his attention was attracted by a van across the street. A young lady was giving directions to the driver, and, as he caught a glimpse of her profile, he was reminded of Miss Beattie. The accidental resemblance brought with it a tinge of remorse. Three months since he had seen her—but Ninety-third street! Why did people choose such out-of-the-way localities?

The profile was soon replaced by the full face, and he saw that it was no accidental resemblance, but Miss Beattie herself.

He grasped his coat and hat, ran down the stairs, and hurried toward her.

Her vivacity was in no way impaired by the necessity of arguing with obdurate van-drivers. She greeted him cordially, and as if they had parted but yesterday.

"Do you live near? Across the street? Not really? How perfectly charming! You must be a good neighbor. It will be a blessing if you will come soon, for I am worn to ravelings with all this packing and moving."

"Soon? May I come this evening?"

She glanced doubtfully at the packing-boxes.

He appreciated her hesitation. "Suppose we dine together somewhere near; that will rest you."

So, it was agreed. As he dressed leisurely for his engagement, without the usual impatient glances at the clock, he thought what a blessing it was to admire a girl who lived across the way.

He followed her instructions to be neighborly, with a conservative limit of three evenings a week, which soon became four, and then five.

For years, he had called occasionally at the house of a young woman who lived on Murray Hill, but, as time went on, his intention to go there was often

frustrated as he reached the sidewalk, by the decision that it was a foolish expenditure of time and vitality to go to Thirty-eighth street, when an equally pretty girl and an equally hearty welcome awaited him near at hand.

There were other homes with marriageable inmates, where, as an undeniably eligible, he had always met with hearty approval; but the same criticism applied to them, and, one by one, they were dropped from his list.

One night, he came home late from business. It had been an exceptionally hard day, and friction had been rife. To add to the unpleasantness, the rain poured in torrents, and the wind rendered even a few steps unendurable. After dinner, he gazed out of the window at the house across the way, against which the water beat with maddening pertinacity. He looked at the puddles in the road, at the glistening asphalt, at the dejected attitudes of man and beast struggling with the elements, then turned to the grate-fire, the table invitingly laden with current literature, the dog warming himself comfortably in the glow. He shuddered at the prospect before him. Of course, it wasn't much of a trip, but when one had to dress and get into one's out-of-door togs, with the addition of umbrella and overshoes, one might as well go to Brooklyn, or even Bensonhurst, as travel a shorter distance. If she only lived in the same house! he thought, regretfully.

Well, why shouldn't she? He reflected, beating a tattoo on the pane. There were sure to be other nights just as uncomfortable as this, and it would save his going out.

He went to the desk, and arranged paper and blotter methodically. He waited a while, pen poised in air. Was the rain holding up? No; the gale was increasing, and the wind howled, mockingly. He wrote for a few moments, dried the effusion, then stood with his back to the fire, and read it aloud to the dog, who growled, jealously.

"I shall not come over this evening, as agreed. I shall never come again unless you write me that I may have the dearest wish of my heart. You must have read my intentions all these months, since that first night at May Seamon's. The situation at present is impossible. Too great a distance separates us. Send me word, that I may get it the first thing in the morning and need not face another day of uncertainty. You must be my wife! I would die for you!"

The rain was now an unbroken sheet. He rang the messenger-call, and entrusted the letter to the wet boy; then, he took off his shoes, put on his slippers, poked the dog, lighted a pipe, and drew an arm-chair up to the grate.

The next night, as he ran up the steps of the house across the way, he looked regretfully at the intervening space and at the dog watching him from his window. "It will be every night for a time, I suppose," he mentally commented; "but I shall see that the time is short."



PROVEN

MYRTILLA is a fickle girl,
And so I told her once;
She merely gave a scornful laugh
And said I was a dunce.

And yet she puts silk stockings on
Whenever it may rain!
Kind reader, don't you think she is
A little weather vain?

THE WEAVER

WHEN silver bells ring out the old,
 And play the new year in,
 A spirit in the Winter woods
 Softly begins to spin;
 No mortal eye has seen her face,
 Or watched her labors there,
 But crocus-buds are in her breast,
 And blossoms in her hair.

She weaves, upon her magic loom,
 The snowdrop's silver sheen,
 The tender tint of April boughs,
 The meadow's velvet green;
 The lilac and the daffodil
 Beneath her fingers grow,
 And as she toils from day to day,
 About her melts the snow.

So, what if clouds are dark with storm,
 And windows white with frost,
 And voices of the running brooks
 In icy vales are lost;
 What if the wondrous northern lights
 Their crimson banners fling—
 Still Nature in the woodland weaves
 The bridal robe of Spring.

MINNA IRVING.



SHADOWS BEFORE

“ARE you not worried by your wife's absence?”
 “No; it's her return that always worries me.”



IT is usual to find feet in poetry; it is unusual to find poetry in feet.



THE marriage relation is a serious affair—when the relation is your wife's mother.

WHEN A MERRY MAIDEN MARRIES

By Alfred Sutro

“MY DEAR, it's merely a matter of common-sense,” urged Mr. Crosfield; “common-sense, that's all. If you, the girl's mother, can't see that it's for her benefit——”

“He is so ugly,” complained the wife; “and so old——and——”

“Tut, tut, Gertie; of course, you can pile it on—that's like you women. You were glad enough when I first brought him here, and, now, when it comes to the point, you see only objections. He's one of the wealthiest men in London, isn't he? And a gentleman—there's no gainsaying that? He's fifty-three, of course, but that cuts both ways. He won't live very long.”

Mrs. Crosfield threw up her hands. “Oh, Edward, don't be so cynical!”

“One has to consider these things, to look at them all around. I tell you, he won't see sixty. And the settlements are *my* affair, aren't they? It's a magnificent chance for the girl!”

“As far as money's concerned—but, for the rest——”

“Nellie's twenty-three, isn't she? And, so far, the only offer she has had was from a War Office clerk with two hundred a year. And we have five other daughters, and they're all growing up, confound 'em! Don't you see what all this means? Married to Grosstein, Nellie can give every one of her sisters a fillip, a send-off. That's so, is it not? You know very well that we spend every penny I make——”

“You *will* live so extravagantly, Edward.”

“That's foolish again. As a solicitor whose business lies chiefly among

these millionaire folk, I *have* to live well—it inspires confidence. I *must* ask my clients home; and I can't invite them to a cut from the joint in a fifty-pound house in Highbury. And, of course, it will pay in the end; but, at present, if I died to-morrow, there'd be only the insurance for you and the girls.”

“Oh, Edward, don't say such things; don't talk of your dying!”

“I shall have to die some day, though, I can tell you, I'm in no hurry! But one has to consider the future. We married when we were youngsters, we two; and you've given me daughters only. The eldest is twenty-three, and the baby's eleven. And poor Nellie's the least attractive of them all. She sits in a corner, and doesn't open her mouth; she has old maid written over her already. When the eldest girl doesn't marry, it blocks the way for the others.”

Mrs. Crosfield was pensive. “I've often regretted that we wouldn't let her take young Wilson.”

“My dear Gertrude! A man with no money, no prospects; nothing but his handsome face! If you're going to indulge in that kind of theory, it's a bad outlook for your children. For heaven's sake, think of your duty!”

“Duty, Edward?”

“Yes, duty. Nellie's a good girl, she'll do what we tell her, or, rather, what *you* tell her. 'Pon my soul, there's only a few years between you! And what you have to do is to put things before her as they are, without any false sentiment. She'll have her house in Grosvenor square, her box at the opera; she'll have carriages and

diamonds—everything that a woman can wish for; and with a devoted husband, mind you. Poor Grosstein adores her. And he's really a very good fellow. Ugly, I grant you—ugly as sin—but the man has a heart. I know many a generous thing he has done. And as for his looks—well, there's more than one woman has very quickly forgotten *them*."

"Edward!"

"Oh, it's fact! These ugly men have a certain charm of their own. And, in any event, don't you think it better for Nell to become a millionaire's wife, and have the world at her feet, than to sit in a corner and mope for the rest of her days?"

"She's so young, Edward! And she has such a sweet, affectionate nature!"

"Bless my soul, you talk as though I didn't care for her! You know that she has always been my special favorite. But I can't shut my eyes to the fact that her shyness and timidity are likely to spoil her chance. And here's this magnificent offer—magnificent, yes, that's the word. Do you think there's a mother in London who would say no to Grosstein? They've been angling for him these twenty years. And he just happens to fall in love with our Nell. Gad, you should hear him talk of her! I tell you it touches me, it really does. He'd crawl on his knees from here to the Bank to be allowed to kiss her hand. And, then, they've their music in common. Few men know as much about music as he."

"He's so old, Edward!"

"My dear friend, if you're simply going to ring the changes on his age and his looks, we sha'n't get very much further. The man's a millionaire, and a gentleman. Would you rather she married young Wilson, and became a mere drudge for the rest of her life? Bless my soul, one would think the face was everything!" And Mr. Crosfield fanned himself with his hat, and walked pettishly to and fro.

"Don't be angry, dear," pleaded his wife. "Of course, I see your point of

view. But the responsibility's awful. Nellie and I are such friends, and she has so much faith in me, that she'll do what I tell her. You know how she gave up Mr. Wilson. And, if I urge her to this—oh, I am her mother! Don't you see how terrible it is?"

"In heaven's name, *what* is terrible? Her having a fine establishment, being settled for life, and able to help her sisters?"

"She'd have to live with a man she doesn't love——"

"Ah, 'love,' of course; there we come to it!" jerked Mr. Crosfield. "Your sister made a love-match, didn't she? And see how it has turned out; if it weren't for us, she'd starve. Oh, my dear, one has to be sensible! A little common-sense, that's all that I ask. There are compensations in nature—nature's all compensation—and Grosstein's millions count for something!"

"As though a girl like our Nell cared about money!"

"That's exactly where her parents step in," said Mr. Crosfield, emphatically. "That's what parents are for. I give you my word, if I thought Grosstein would not make a good husband, the very best of husbands, I'd send him packing, though he were ten times wealthier than he is. But the man's all right; in fact, he's a pathetic figure. It's not as though he were a widower, with grown-up sons and daughters who'd hate the new wife! Grosstein's alone, he has scarcely a relation living; he has been solitary always; and now, suddenly, comes this overwhelming affection!"

"He has led a very fast life, they say."

"Tut, tut! He has been like all other men. Come, Gertie, what's the use of discussing this any further? Your mind's made up, I know; you've far too much sense to let such a great chance slip. Grosstein will be here in an hour or two. You have a talk with Nellie. Good-bye, dear; I'm off."

He leaned over to kiss her, but Mrs. Crosfield caught hold of his wrist. "No, wait," she said; and she got up and rang. "She's your daughter, too; you shall tell her, yourself."

Mr. Crosfield gave a whimsical laugh. "My dear Gertie, that is the mother's affair."

"Nellie thinks the world of you; she shall hear what you have to say. Yes, yes, she must!" A footman came in. "Ask Miss Helen to come here, please." The man went.

"And then she shall decide for herself; I'll put no sort of pressure on her."

"Who talked of pressure? A woman of twenty-three is not a child, is she? Of course, she'll decide for herself. And, as for the money part, she has had her dress-allowance of two hundred a year, and I fancy she spends it. I've not noticed any particular craving on her part to sit in the five-shilling seats at the opera, or to ride in 'busses. The fact is, my dear Gertie, all one demands in a case like this is to have no claptrap. Nellie shall decide, of course; it is her affair. All we have to do is to put things before her as they really are—that's all."

Mrs. Crosfield was about to reply, when the door opened, and Helen came in. She was a tall, slender girl, with masses of waving black hair that were coiled on the top of her head. Her face was pale, and her black eyes and hair seemed to make it paler still; but there was a grace about her, a wistful tenderness, that appealed like the scent of a flower; and she had exquisite hands, with long, nervous, tapering fingers, almost startlingly white, that never moved and yet possessed a strange sensitiveness, an expression of their own. She went to her mother, who passed an arm around her and kissed her.

There was a moment's silence. "Tell her, Edward," said Mrs. Crosfield.

Her husband shrugged his shoulders. "My dear Nellie," he began, "your mother's very ceremonious about this thing, and making a sort of mystery of it. It has been evident enough to you that Mr. Grosstein is in love with you; well he is coming this afternoon to ask you to marry him."

The girl shivered, and nestled closer to her mother.

"We, of course," Mr. Crosfield went on, "have not the slightest wish to influence you in the least. Grosstein is fifty-three, and he is not handsome. I shall not for a moment pretend that, were it not for his money, I should have encouraged him in his intentions. But he is enormously wealthy, and honest and honorable, besides; and so I have given him my consent and approval."

Helen made no sign; she merely kept her eyes fixed on her father, as he proceeded, more lightly:

"You're twenty-three; it's time, of course, that you married. I don't regard this as the ideal union, but, then, ideal unions are as rare as—as your mother and I, let us say;" and he laughed. "I approve the step Mr. Grosstein is taking, and I shall be very glad indeed if you accept his proposal. And that's all I have to say. I will leave you two to discuss things."

He moved to the door, but Helen left her mother's side, and went quickly to him.

"Father!" she said, "father!" And she laid a hand on his arm.

"What is it, Nell?" He bent forward and kissed her. "What is it, pale-face? If you've any questions to ask, you had better put them to your mother."

"I don't like Mr. Grosstein, father."

Mr. Crosfield again lifted his shoulders. "He has been here quite a good deal, and you're both music-mad. I thought you were friends."

"So we are, in a way—in music. But I don't like the way he— Has he led a good life, father?"

Mr. Crosfield bit his mustache, and hesitated. Then, he answered, stoutly:

"No, he has not. He has led a man's life, a bachelor's; the life of a man who has had every woman, or, at least, every woman of one class, on her knees before him since he was about seventeen. And that kind of thing does not make for righteousness. I'm perfectly frank, you see. But he has never been known to break a promise or do a dishonorable thing. A man's code of honor is different from a woman's; but, such as it is, Grosstein

has never infringed it. That counts for something, doesn't it? And he adores you; he tells me you are the first woman he has met in all his life whom he has truly loved; that hereafter he will live only for your happiness."

"There could be no happiness for me with him, father," said the girl.

"Then, my dear child, don't take him," replied Mr. Crosfield, cheerfully; "refuse him, by all means! Only—just one thing—he loves music, and so do you. It's your great passion, and it's his. That constitutes a kind of bond. And what you've got to ask yourself is this: Will you be one of the richest women in London, one of the most considered—for, mind you, there's not a stain on Grosstein's name; he's a member of the very best clubs, he has entertained royalty, he is received everywhere—will you have all doors thrown open to you, be a society leader, almost a queen, or will you remain an old maid?"

The girl dropped her eyes. "I'm only twenty-three, father."

"Put it any way you like, but it's time you got married. I can't afford to give money with my daughters, and men look for money, nowadays. There it is; talk it over with your mother. Grosstein will be here this afternoon. Do exactly what you think best. You asked for my opinion, and I've given it to you. And, now, I must really be off. Good-bye, my dear"—he kissed his daughter affectionately—"good-bye, Gertie;" and, with a wave of the hand to his wife, Mr. Crosfield was gone.

Helen sat down, her face so sad that Mrs. Crosfield went impetuously to her, and said:

"You sha'n't, my dear; you sha'n't! If you don't like him, you sha'n't! That's settled. Don't worry about it, Nell. You needn't even see him again; I'll tell him myself."

"Father will be angry," sighed the girl.

"He'll be disappointed, of course," replied her mother, "but not angry; oh, no. He's much too fond of you ever to wish you to marry a man you

don't like. If that's the way you feel——"

"He's so repulsive!" murmured Helen. "I had a suspicion, of course, but I—I—I never thought— Oh, mother, I can't, I can't!" And she buried her head in her mother's lap.

"Bless the child! that's all right," said Mrs. Crosfield, soothingly, as she stroked the girl's black hair. "When he comes this afternoon, I'll receive him, myself, and tell him I've spoken to you, and so on. Don't cry, Nell; it's all settled."

"I know father will be angry," sobbed the girl.

"Not angry, my dear, not angry; oh, no. Your father is one of the best of men; but, of course—well, you see, we spend a great deal of money; we put nothing by; and there are all the other girls growing up, and, of course, the parents feel that. If you *had* cared for Mr. Grosstein, it would naturally have made a tremendous difference; but you don't, so there's no more to be said."

"Wouldn't it have been wrong, mother, to marry him, feeling as I do?"

"Oh, my dear, it's settled that you're *not* going to marry him. As regards wrong—ah, I'm growing old, I suppose, and I'm not as sentimental as I once was; but one sees so much! My sister Lydia and her husband were like *Romeo and Juliet*, and yet, before two years, she had to divorce him!"

"But you and father, mother——"

"Yes, my dear; we've been happy. But your father is a far better man than most men, and, even so, I've had to shut my eyes more than once. I speak to you now as one woman to another. Of course, one has to be able to respect one's husband; without respect, it's dreadful; but love—oh, Nell, I don't know! When I look at my friends who've been married in the last twenty years, I'm not at all sure that the happiest ones are those who have fallen in love. Poverty's so terrible, Nell! It's the most awful thing in this world, I think, and it all falls on the wife. However good the husband may be, good and sympathetic

and tender, it's the wife who suffers most. We were shockingly poor for years, your father and I; and, my dear, when you were born—but I won't go into that. Only, I tell you it was very bad. We prospered at last, thank God! The misfortune is that your father's so frightfully extravagant. It's in his blood; I suppose he can't help it. And I'm afraid I've been to blame, too. All you girls have been brought up extravagantly; not one of you is fitted to be a poor man's wife. To marry a man with just a few hundred a year would mean misery to you—it would, believe me, dear."

Helen cast down her eyes. "I wasn't thinking of Mr. Wilson, mother."

"The first glamour wears off," continued the elder woman, "and then—well, then life begins. And you can't imagine how hard it is. I don't think I'm mercenary—but, oh, what a frightful deal one can do with money!"

"I'll marry Mr. Grosstein, if you wish me to, mother."

Mrs. Crosfield raised her hands. "Heaven forbid! You don't like him, and, therefore, that's settled. But I'll tell you, Nell, speaking quite frankly, I think one of the most miserable things that can happen to a woman is to remain single. There is nothing more wretched. She hasn't a particle of liberty till she's too old to enjoy it; she's a waif in the world—it offers her only corners, from which she looks out on other people's sorrow and happiness. Oh, my dear, I think anything's better than being single and placid and hungry and merely an observer of other people!"

"Don't you think I should marry, then, mother?"

"I'll tell you just what I think. As soon as you *are* married, you'll have every man at your feet, because you possess the rarest thing in the world—charm. But, you see, as a girl, you're timid and tongue-tied and shy; you don't know how to use your weapons, and no one can teach you how. And men are so shockingly stupid! You will generally find that the girl whom they all run after, the girl who has

heaps of offers, becomes the dullest creature under the sun as soon as she's married; while the woman who queens it, as likely as not only secured her husband by the merest fluke. And you're like that, you see. You're shy; you haven't the blatant good looks that attract young men; even your music is a drawback to you, for there's scarcely one man in a thousand who, in his heart, doesn't think music a bore. So, quite honestly, I don't think you'll marry—I mean for love, of course—a suitable man. You don't care for dancing, you're not a flirt or a romp—in fact, my dear, you have a soul, and you can't hide it enough to attract the average male."

"Is it so very dreadful to be an old maid? I could teach music——"

"Not while I live! That's the terrible thing, of course; it keeps me awake at night. If anything—which God forbid!—were to happen to your dear father, we should have barely four hundred a year to live on!"

"Couldn't I earn anything, mother? I could give lessons."

"Lessons! Why, look at your sisters' governesses! They are ladies; they've been delicately brought up—look at them! They have a room somewhere in Kensington, or Bloomsbury, up on the fifth floor; and they don't live at all, they merely teach and sleep. You remember that pretty Miss Heddlestone, who left us five years ago to get married, and then broke it off? My dear, I met her last week, and I shouldn't have known her. I don't suppose that she's more than thirty or so, but she might be forty or fifty, to judge by her looks—only, poor thing, no one would care to know *how* old she is! Drudgery ages us, dear, more than sorrow or sickness; women fade under it. Oh, heaven forbid that a daughter of mine should ever have to earn her own living!"

"If I married Mr. Grosstein, mother, should I be so very rich?"

"Rich! My dear, you could have what you liked, do what you liked, be what you liked. There would be absolutely nothing beyond your reach. He

adores you, you see; and he's middle-aged, and wouldn't get tired of *you*; but, on the contrary, he would be always in deadly terror lest you should tire of *him*. So, you see, he would never change, his worship would last to the end. And, my dear, you'd be a great lady! You'd have all the famous musicians of the world around you; you'd be on intimate terms with all the most eminent men. There's not a great novelist or politician or painter whom you couldn't see at your table. And then, in the country, you would have house-parties right through the Autumn; and your trips on his great steam-yacht—Greece, that you always are raving about, the Ionian Sea, the Archipelago, Constantinople—think of months spent cruising about, with pleasant company always! Ah, my dear, I've been rattling on; but just turn a deaf ear to all this. You don't like the man, and it's settled."

"Would you and father come and stay with me?"

"Why, of course. And you could have one of the girls with you, always. That's the advantage of a large family!"

"Would he allow that, do you think?"

"Allow! My dear, it would be for *you* to allow things! He would spend the rest of his life on his knees before you; what you said would be law."

"I should be awfully rich, mother, and able to do all sorts of things for you, and the girls, and any one I cared for? I should be awfully, awfully rich?"

"So rich, my dear, that I should never worry again about the future of any one of my children."

"And will you promise to come to Greece with me? Oh, Greece would be lovely! Will you promise?"

"You foolish child!"

"Will you promise? You must!"

Mrs. Crosfield laughed, merrily. "I promise. But, Nell, you don't mean to—?"

"Yes, mother, I will. You're right; I see that. I'm the eldest girl; we've no brothers; I mustn't consider my-

self only—I'll marry Mr. Grosstein, mother."

"My dear, I should be the unhappiest woman in the world, if I thought I had influenced you in any way."

"You've only been quite frank with me, dear, and told me the truth. You're right; I should be an old maid, I suppose, if I didn't take Mr. Grosstein; and that wouldn't be fair to the others. So, I will, mother."

"Think it over, dear; there's no hurry. You needn't give your answer to-day."

"Oh, yes, I will, mother; I will! I've made up my mind."

"See him this afternoon, if you like; hear what he has to say, and then take time to consider."

"What for, now that I see it's my duty? I don't like him, of course—that's the worst of it. But, then, there's the music, and father says he's an honorable man. Oh, yes, mother, I'll do it!"

"My dear Nellie—" began Mrs. Crosfield.

But the girl went quickly to her, and kissed her again and again. "Dear old mother," she said, as she caressed her, "you've been most awfully sweet! And it's quite right. I see it all clearly, now. Don't you worry, mumsie, I'll get used to him, in time; and, then, there's the music. Oh, yes, I'll do it!" And she kissed her mother again, and held her close.

Mrs. Crosfield could only whisper, "Nellie, Nellie, darling!" and stroke the dear head, and pray to God in her heart that all things would turn out well.

Presently, the door opened, and a footman came in. "Mr. Grosstein has called, madame."

Helen trembled so violently that her mother was startled. "Ask him to wait a minute," she said.

But the girl interposed. "No, no! Let him come in now, dear," she whispered; "please."

"At once?" asked her mother, anxiously.

"Yes, yes, at once."

"Show Mr. Grosstein in, Peters,"

ordered Mrs. Crosfield; and the footman disappeared.

Mrs. Crosfield was full of concern. "Nell, dear," she began, "don't forget that——"

But Helen interrupted, feverishly: "Oh, mother, I'm all right; I'm quite all right. Let's get it over; let's get it over." And, crossing the room, she went back to her chair.

Mr. Grosstein was ushered in. He was a short, stout man, with a shining bald head and huge pointed ears that stood out from his face. He was carefully and quietly dressed; but a vague odor of perfume entered the room with him.

The footman announced him, and went away. Mr. Grosstein bowed to the ladies. His dark, heavy face was impassive, but his deep-set eyes betrayed a curious nervousness. Mrs. Crosfield stared at the floor, and for a moment there was silence.

"I am glad to find you at home," said the visitor. He spoke with a slight foreign accent, but his voice was smooth and pleasant. "I was afraid this fine weather might have tempted you out."

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Grosstein?" asked Mrs. Crosfield, noticing that he was still standing. As she looked at him, his ugliness stabbed her. Then, her eyes met Helen's, and she braced herself for a great effort.

"Helen, my dear——" she began.

But the girl had divined her mother's purpose. "My headache's much better," she said, bravely. "I'm quite all right, thanks."

Mr. Grosstein flashed a quick glance at mother and daughter. "Have you a headache? I am very sorry."

"Oh, it's nothing, thanks. I have headaches, sometimes; but they go very quickly."

Mr. Grosstein sat down, with his back to the light. "The weather's so trying," he said; "tropical heat one day, and frigid cold the next. You've the courage, I see, to have a fire. Last night, we dined with the windows open. And, oh, by the way, that

young and wonderful Italian tenor was passing through London—and took me by surprise. I was dining alone, as it happened, and after dinner he sang to me; oh, dear heaven, how he sang!"

Helen's eyes kindled. "That must have been lovely! To you alone?"

"Yes. My secretary, you remember, is quite a fine pianist; he played the accompaniments. I felt like the King of Bavaria. Oh, it was great!"

"Do you see him often?" inquired Mrs. Crosfield.

"Oh, yes, during the season. And they stay with me, now and again, in the Autumn, he and his brother, and a great many other singers. I have a little theatre at my place in Dorset, and we have fine times. Oh, it's splendid fun! Last year, we did the first act of 'Siegfried.' I was the dwarf. I fancy I looked the part even better than I sang it!" And he laughed.

"I didn't know that you sang," said Mrs. Crosfield, quickly.

"Well, I don't sing often now, though I used to sing quite a great deal. Dear me, if my father hadn't been so well off, I might have become a noted personage! Instead of being a mere commonplace millionaire, I might have been Grosstein, *the* baritone! Miss Crosfield," he went on, bending forward a little, "I've some news that will interest you. I've discovered a tenor. He is a boy who worked in my stable! I heard him singing there this morning. It was a mere music-hall song, an absurd sentimental ballad, but I tell you it was sung by a voice that is marvelous, extraordinary! Truly!"

"Really!" said Helen, all interest again. "And what do you mean to do?"

"I have bought him," laughed Mr. Grosstein; "bought Tom Jenkins. I have seen his father and mother. I told them of his brilliant future; they thought of the nine or ten shillings he brought home to them every week, and consented to let me capitalize the amount. So, I sent

them away rejoicing, and to-morrow my courier will start with the boy for Milan."

"What luck for the lad!" exclaimed Mrs. Crosfield, with a glance at her daughter. Helen's eyes were shining; the pallor had left her cheek.

"Luck for *me*," replied Mr. Grosstein, "to have discovered such a wonder. Why, though I mayn't live to see it, that boy will be as great a tenor as the world has ever seen. It's true!"

Helen smiled. Mrs. Crosfield gave a deep sigh of relief, and rose.

"It has been a great joy to me," Mr. Grosstein went on, his eyes fixed on Helen. "I live for music. As one grows older, one learns to put things in their places. And music is my religion, my soul. I am proud to have discovered this boy, thankful to enrich the world with him! I feel like an astronomer who has found a new star!"

Helen was listening, wholly engrossed; Mrs. Crosfield slipped noiselessly across the thick carpet, opened the door, and glanced back. They had not noticed her. The girl had caught the man's enthusiasm, and was looking eagerly at him. Mrs. Crosfield smiled happily, and closed the door.

"A star, yes, a star! I assure you, his voice is a marvel, a miracle! And he shall be trained. You see, he's only fourteen, and has nothing to unlearn. He has run wild, so far, and has just sung out the heart that is in him. He shall have the very finest training that Italy can give, and, mind you, not in music only. One must consider the brain, as well as the voice. I don't believe in your stupid tenors, who can't read or write. And, just fancy, if it hadn't been for me, if I hadn't stepped in at the right moment, the boy might have become a *lion comique* at the Pavilion!"

He turned, and noticed that Mrs. Crosfield was gone. Helen's eyes followed his; she, too, saw the empty chair, and, with a start, she remembered. Her pupils dilated, her flushed

face turned white. Mr. Grosstein looked eagerly at her; then he lowered his eyes.

"I hope you will go to Milan some day, and hear him," he said. His voice was hoarse; beads of perspiration stood out on his brow.

Helen was silent. She made evident efforts to speak, but failed. For two or three seconds, they sat without a word passing between them, while the fire crackled cheerfully on the hearth, and the confused noise of the London streets filled the room.

He raised his head, and his eyes sought hers. "Will you come to Milan—with me?"

Helen gripped her chair with both hands, to keep herself from falling. It had come; she must be brave!

"Oh, Helen, Helen, will you marry me?"

He had leaned forward, but the girl's shiver was too palpable, and he drew quickly back. "Do you hate me so much?" he asked, with a groan.

"I do not hate you," she murmured, faintly; and her voice sounded strange in her ears.

"Oh, my God, will you marry me, Helen?"

Her brain was dully wondering what was the scent that he used, and why he used it. She had to force herself to think of the music and Milan and the famous tenors; of the theatre in Dorset, and of Greece; of her mother and father, those two who would be so pleased. At this thought, she smiled, and her eyes turned on the man who was almost kneeling at her feet. At the sight, her blood rolled back in a torrent, she turned icy-cold, her teeth chattered.

"Helen, Helen, will you marry me?"

He seized one of her hands, and it suddenly burned. She tried to withdraw it, but in vain; her strength had left her. She felt her hand blistering, she heard its skin cracking; she threw back her head, and gasped.

"Helen, Helen," he cried, "I'm old, and I'm ugly, but I love you! I asked your father to tell you the truth, not to spare me, to tell you of all the

wretched life I've led. But I'm not a bad man. There's a soul inside me, a soul like other people's, and that soul is yours. You shall do what you like with me; I'll be your thing, your dog! I've been a lonely creature, always. Oh, Helen, help me, help me!"

Something within her was sorry; she could feel for him in his loneliness. Something told her that there was good stuff in the man, and that, anyhow, she must go through with the matter; so, she faltered, "Yes." But, even as she spoke the word, the mist of

sorrow rolled away, and she saw him as he looked. Then, a sickness overspread her, and she moaned.

But the word had reached him. He gave a great bound.

"Darling, darling!" he cried; "darling!"

He flung his arms around her waist. She shivered, and closed her eyes. And, then, the horrible, sickly perfume entered her nostrils and penetrated her brain, as, leaning passionately forward, Mr. Grosstein kissed her on the lips.



CHIROMANCY

A SURREY glen, a leafy camp,
A Romany coquette
Who read my palm, and took my crown
But left me still in debt.
I see her now, as fair as day,
Though tawny as the woodsy gloom,
Upon this festive night that seats
A gipsy in the drawing-room.

'Tis Madge, tricked out most takingly
In wondrous crimson things,
Her hair in braids, her ears weighed down
With quaint old golden rings.
She's telling fortunes, every word
Oraculous to a degree;
The company as grave as if
Worlds hung upon her prophecy.

I wait my turn, heart beating high,
And wonder what she'll say.
Strange I should care! I heard unmoved
My fate, that Surrey day.
But this I know, 'twill be my *past*
That she will tell, and that alone;
For, read my *future* in my hand,
How can she—when 'tis in her own?

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



PARKE—What did your wife say when you came home late?
LANE—You mean what didn't she say.

April 1903

NOCTURNE

*THE shifting shadows hide me:
 Love, let the curtains part,
 And light the stars to guide me—
 Your eyes, Sweetheart!*

She heard the music, note by note,
 Across the garden's fragrance float;
 Faintly, at first, it came as though
 It were the wind's voice, soft and low—
 A ghost of song that breathed upon
 The silence once, and then was gone.
 But soon it grew more clear and sweet;
 And soon her heart began to beat
 With joy, and mark the measured time
 Of married melody and rhyme;
 Then, through the curtains' folds of lace,
 She looked and saw her lover's face.

*The vines have sworn to cheat me:
 Love, speak the word to start
 The rose from dreams to greet me—
 Your lips, Sweetheart!*

She threw the lattice open wide—
 A golden ray upon the tide
 Of darkness fell; and there, all still,
 Moon-white above the window-sill,
 Like some strange flower of snow, she seemed
 To blossom while the garden dreamed.
 Far down, she saw him, rapt and mute—
 The lover with his lyric lute;
 Then, from her bosom, something white
 And fragrant dropped down through the night.
 Quickly, she threw the rose, and then
 The air grew sweet with song again.

*The bright star brings its token!
 I need no other chart.
 The rose's lips have spoken—
 Good night, Sweetheart!*

JULIAN DURAND.



A SOCIAL WHIRL

FIRST TORNADO—Did you have any fun in Kansas?
 SECOND TORNADO—Yes. I carried several audiences by storm.

A GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY

By Tom Masson

“WHAT fun it will be!”
It was barely noon. To young Cleverton, issuing fresh from his bachelor apartments, the day seemed unusually bright and cheerful. For one of the rarest pleasures that can be the lot of cynic man was about to come to this gay spirit, who for many years had been so saturated with the atmosphere of the metropolis that a real new sensation was an event.

Not that Cleverton was too blasé. He had contrived to keep his enthusiasm always, through all the days and nights since he had left his native place. But the big town had left its mark upon him, and the impress of all its worldliness had made of him what we may see anywhere, if we but glance up the Avenue—that restless yet calm, that alert yet self-contained, creation of aggressive municipality—a New Yorker.

And, now, the young girl that he had known so long ago, that innocent, blithe and blond-haired little creature, with whom he used to play when he was a boy, who, during all the years he had been slowly rising in the city, had lived her life in the simple surroundings that were still so vivid to him—she was in town!

And he was about to entertain her; he was to show her the gay city, with its multiplex attractions. No wonder Cleverton exclaimed to himself that it would be fun. What greater fun can there be than to teach the innocent?

Cleverton felt all his fund and store of experience within him as he swung along. All of his metropolitan life lay back of him like cash in the bank,

giving him a confidence serene. Oh, the pleasure it would be to show this young girl what a man he was! He thought of all the little gestures of surprise, of awe, that would naturally come to her. Unconsciously, he quickened his pace.

Miss Bessie Somerset was visiting an aunt in Thirty-ninth street. Cleverton stopped at the station for his automobile. In twenty minutes, he had snorted up to the door of the address the girl had sent him.

Miss Somerset greeted him cordially.

“How many years it is since we met!” she cried; “and how you have changed! What do you think of me? Or isn’t this fair, on such short notice?”

Cleverton laughed, and, this time, it was a slightly embarrassed laugh. This trimly gowned, up-to-date young lady was a surprise to him. His fancy went back to the old days. He had expected—well, something different.

“You, too, have changed,” he said, soberly. “How handsome you have grown!”

“Of course, I have!” she replied. “Why shouldn’t I?” From some girls, this would have sounded flat; from this confident creature, never! It but added to her charm. “And now,” she added, “what are you going to do with me, this afternoon? We are such old friends, you know, that I am going to be candid itself.”

“Get into my machine,” said Cleverton, “and we’ll go to Sherry’s for luncheon.”

“Good!” she exclaimed; “I’ll be back in a jiffy.”

“I see,” she remarked, as the chauffeur guided them into the Avenue,

"that you have a Hansard. Do you like that as well as a Steelrib?"

Cleverton gazed at her in surprise. "Do they have automobiles in Pike-town?" he asked.

She laughed. "Dear me! yes, of course. Let me show you how to run one."

Turning to the chauffeur, she ordered him to slow up. As the bulky machine came to a stop, she stepped lightly into the front seat, and, grasping the clutch, was off before Cleverton realized what had happened. On they sped, threading their way skilfully through the throng of vehicles. Cleverton could not have done it better, or as well, himself.

"And now," she said, as they slowed down, obedient to her touch, "let's go back to Sherry's, and get some luncheon. You know, I have never been in New York, except to go through hurriedly, and I want to see everything."

A few moments more, and they were sitting at a gleaming white table, with the glint of china between them.

"What are you going to have?" asked Cleverton.

She laughed, gaily. "Don't you know," she said, "that it isn't good form to ask me what I am going to have? You, sir, should order the luncheon, yourself."

Cleverton gasped. But he did as he was told, to the best of his ability.

He had purchased tickets to the *matinée*, some days before, and, as the luncheon drew to a close, he mentioned this fact.

"What is it?" she asked.

"The Insolence of Betty," he replied.

"How unfortunate! I have seen it," she exclaimed.

"Where could you have seen it?" asked Cleverton. "It has only been put on here this week."

"Oh, it came to Piketown two weeks ago. Most of the good plays come

there, before they are put on in New York."

"Then, we'll go to the opera. You haven't seen that, have you?"

Miss Somerset smiled a superior smile. "To be sure," she said. "Haven't I been to Paris? But we'll go, anyway, if you don't mind. The opera is lots better than a thin play."

So, to the opera they went.

During the three hours that followed, a great change came to Cleverton. Whether it was the music or not, as they came out of the crowded house, and made their way to Miss Bessie's aunt's, a certain shade of melancholy came over him. This young girl, whom he had thought to be so simple, and with whom, as a kindly and experienced guide, he had expected to have so much fun, had not turned out quite as he had fancied. Her sprightly figure, with its absolutely correct outlines, gave him a new sensation. Here was a creature whom he could worship, rather than instruct.

At last, they stood together in the fashionable drawing-room, with its etchings and mahogany.

"I've had an awfully good time," she said. "Really, you have made me feel very much at home. You must go now, as I am going out with auntie to dine; but come again soon, won't you?"

Cleverton clasped her hand. She did not withdraw it.

"Of course, I'll come again," he said. "And, say, Bessie—" His years of New York, where were they now? After all, he was nothing but a simple-minded pleader.

"Well?" she said, interrogatively.

"Would—you—mind—if I—kissed you?" he asked.

She smiled—the advanced smile of Piketown and of Paris, not of old New York.

"Why, certainly not," she replied.

"But, don't you know, it's so provincial to ask!"



DO you know that your wife is living under an assumed name?

THE PLUMPNESS OF PRISCILLA

By Temple Bailey

ALL her little-girl life, Priscilla had been called pretty. To the end of her schooldays, the adjective continued applicable, and young ladyhood brought no reason for its discontinuance. Hence, Priscilla led the life of serene content that comes to the woman who knows that her charm is assured.

There came the day, however, when she discovered the first smirch of the finger of time. To some women it is shown in a wrinkle, a gray hair, or a scragginess of neck, but, whatever the finger-mark, that day is always a day of awakening.

Priscilla's mark was a double chin.

There had been other small indications. Once, she lost her breath when climbing a hill.

"Can it be my heart?" she thought, and pictured herself in an early decline.

Soon, a considerate dressmaker spoke of straight lines and trailing effects, and was reserved on the subject of waist measurements.

Priscilla's family, which adored her, refused to enlighten her.

"You should exercise, dear," her mother said, gently, when Priscilla, kimono-clad, looked startlingly material.

"Why?" asked Priscilla, with up-raised eyebrows.

Her mother hesitated to face the truth.

"Oh, it will do you good," she said, vaguely.

But the revelation came from a well-meaning shop-girl.

Priscilla was examining plaid bodices.

"I wonder if I could wear this?"

she said, musingly, meaning the color, which was green.

"Yes, indeed, miss," said the girl, effusively. "There was a lady in here the other day, with one of them waists on, and she looked lovely, and she was as stout as you."

As stout as—! Priscilla's soul shrank within her.

"No, I won't take it," she said, and caught her breath, sharply.

Arrived at home, Priscilla went straight to her room, and locked the door. Then, without removing her hat, she adjusted the cheval mirror, and looked into it.

No one not understanding Priscilla could appreciate the shock. It seemed to coarsen her at once, mentally as well as physically. For years, she had been ethereal and spirituelle, she had been a bit of Dresden china—frail and fragile. She had adored the lankiness of Watts maidens. The long-faced virgins of Botticelli had seemed of more heavenly type than the round-faced ones of other masters. She had attitudinized in Burne-Jones droopiness, and had affected Rossetti states of mind. Her whole impulse was esthetic, rather than practical. She had conceived that an artistic soul must dwell in an attenuated body, and had attributed to certain plump aunts and corpulent uncles no capacity for romance.

Then there was Israfael Bernhardt!

He was a young artist of Jewish extraction. He appealed to Priscilla through the carefully cultivated mysticism of his manner. He said little, his eyes expressed much, and he loved Priscilla.

As yet, there was no announced

engagement, for Israfael was without means or prospects.

Priscilla's cousin, Dick, hated Israfael.

"Give me a good chance, and I'll punch his head," he said, when Priscilla quoted her lover's opinion of the unesthetic qualities of golf. Dick loved out-of-door life. So had Priscilla, once. When she lounged in cushioned corners for Israfael's artist soul's sake, Nature revenged herself, and curves took the place of healthy girlish leanness.

"Such a beautiful head," said Priscilla, reproachfully.

"When is he coming back?"

"In six weeks."

Priscilla was wondering if Israfael would find her changed. He had called her a nymph, and nymphs were not—fat.

Priscilla was dressed in black. She had never worn it before, and Cousin Dick looked at her—dissatisfied.

"Don't wear black again, Pris," he said; "it is too mournful and too old for you."

"But it makes me look thin." Priscilla tried to make her tone gay.

"Thin?" For a moment Cousin Dick looked puzzled. "What do you want to look thin for?" he asked, savagely. "You're just right."

Priscilla's face beamed. After all, Cousin Dick was rather nice. "Do you really think so, Dick?" she said.

Suddenly, Dick took both of her hands. "You are always just right to me, Priscilla," and his steady eyes looked straight down into hers; "and you will be when you are old and gray-headed and weigh a ton."

After his departure, Priscilla trailed up-stairs with a smile on her lips, but, once in her room, the mirror brought back her melancholy.

On her dressing-table lay a letter from Israfael, postmarked "Dresden."

I do not like the German women. They are pretty when very young, but when they grow older they are tubs. Red cheeks, plump arms and impossible waists—it is like being in a gallery of Rubens' buxom models, and you know my detestation of Rubens.

Priscilla laid his letter down with a groan, and took an inventory of like deficiencies in herself.

Then, she grew energetic. At least, there were "systems."

At breakfast, the next morning, she ate nothing. The family stared aghast. Of late, Priscilla's appetite had been a thing to consider.

"What's the matter with her?" asked Priscilla's father of his wife, when Priscilla had gone up-stairs.

When, however, Mrs. Pierce had interviewed Priscilla, she ordered oranges and dry toast for luncheon, and stifled her husband's questions when Priscilla dined on lettuce and vinegar and lean meat.

That night, Cousin Dick sent his weekly box of chocolates, and Priscilla gave them, heroically, to the cook. The next day, he met her down-town, and invited her to have an ice-cream soda, but she took lemonade instead.

Cousin Dick gazed at her in wonder. "What's the matter?" he asked, anxiously. No one had ever known Priscilla to decline chocolate soda. It was one of her little-girl, feminine weaknesses that endeared her to Dick.

"I prefer this," said Priscilla, mendaciously, and changed the subject.

"Let's take a long walk to-morrow," she said; "would you like it?" She leaned toward him, eagerly, and the scent of the violets pinned in her coat enveloped him.

"Would I?—well!" Cousin Dick's deep voice was gruff with joy.

So, the next morning, through the long avenues of the city, and out into the Autumn-tinted woods, went the two, and sat on moss-covered gray rocks, and were as far away from the noise and dust of the big city as if in the depths of the primeval forest. And Priscilla's rippling laugh was sweeter than the voice of the little, limpid brook, and her hair was as yellow as the golden leaves of the maple, and her lips matched the holly berries.

And, watching her, Cousin Dick, big, athletic, unesthetic Cousin Dick, floundered deeper and deeper into a heartache.

"We'll come again?" said Priscilla, with a rising inflection.

"We'll come every day," said Cousin Dick, ardently; and so, the daily walk became a thing to be counted on—by Cousin Dick, because it brought him Priscilla; by Priscilla, because it promised thinness.

Thus was Cousin Dick sacrificed to a system.

But Priscilla did not grow thin. She grew bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, and swift-footed and beautiful, but the scales showed accessions rather than diminutions.

Meanwhile, Israfael?

Another letter had come—from London.

The English girls—they love exercise. They are big and beefy. They sit in the sunlight, and tramp in the rain. There are no shadows in their lives; they are all glare. Ah, my Priscilla, when I think of you in your clinging, vine-like beauty, I hate all this, and in my heart I fly back to you.

Clinging vine! As Priscilla finished the letter, she glanced up into the accusing mirror. She was short-skirted and Norfolk-jacketed and soft-hatted, and she was not vine-like. No, Israfael would have to find another word.

She sighed, and went down-stairs.

Cousin Dick met her at the foot.

"You beauty!" he said, as he might have said to her when he was a little boy in knickerbockers, and she a little girl with long braids; and Priscilla blushed and liked it.

As they climbed a long hill to the little wood, in which Cousin Dick had enshrined Priscilla, he asked a question—haltingly.

"Priscilla, are you engaged to that—to Bernhardt?"

Priscilla sat down on the grass, and grew confidential.

"No, not exactly; I haven't promised—but he won't love me a bit when he comes back, Dick."

"Won't what?" Dick's tone was supremely incredulous.

"Oh, I know him! He likes me slender—and sinuous, you know—Mrs. Pat outlines, and all that."

There was a stern line on Dick's forehead, and his lips were firmly set, but Priscilla went on:

"And I'm awfully afraid I shall have to give up the walks, Dick; I don't get a bit thinner."

"You don't—what?"

"And, of course, that's what I am taking them for. But my system says that if the desired effect is not produced—" Priscilla was quoting, but stopped, as Cousin Dick rose and towered above her—six feet two.

"You took these walks because of a system?"

His voice was tense, and Priscilla, raising her eyes swiftly, saw the look on his face, and grew white.

"Yes," she faltered.

"And I was—fool enough—to think—you liked to go—with me."

"I do like to go with you—Dick, Dick, I do, I do!" wailed Priscilla; but Cousin Dick, with the same little-boy rudeness which had governed him when they had quarreled as children, left her, and Priscilla went home by herself.

After that, Priscilla tried other systems, and found herself horribly lonely. A great weariness had fallen upon her. She did not care whether Israfael approved of her or not, and, when his next letter, from Paris, lauded the French women—"I am at home with these women who feel; they have temperament, and it is temperament that counts, after all"—Priscilla stuck his letter far back in her desk, and longed for Dick—dear, restless Cousin Dick, who did not know temperament from temperature, when it applied to her, and who loved her without analysis.

Then, she plunged into a wild orgy of dumb-bells and dancing, of punching-bags and poundings, of Turkish baths and tennis, from which she emerged, rosy and round.

And, then, she gave it up.

The days in the open air, the association with a man of strength, of action, had made Israfael seem a man of dreams. She found herself dreading, instead of anticipating, the return to

the cushioned corner and to poetry-laden sentences. She wished, more than she had ever before wished anything, to walk with Cousin Dick in the freshness of the morning—not to rhapsodize with Israfael in the dimness of the twilight.

With the change of interests came also the change of ideals. Surely, it was better to feel the blood pulsing through one's veins, to find joy in being alive, to run like a Diana through the woods, than to be a willowy maiden, and hold a sunflower.

So, it came about that a little note brought back Cousin Dick, and, later, another one went to Israfael, which started that young man home from Paris, without delay.

Two weeks later, there waited on the pier, in the mists of the early Winter morning, a man and a maid. The strong wind that ruffled the water blew tendrils of gold across the gray coat of the man, as the girl stood half-sheltered by his broad shoulders.

Over the rail of the incoming boat leaned another man, who gazed eagerly

at the mass of color that told of people waiting.

At first, he could not distinguish a single person; but, as the vessel covered the intervening water, he picked out, at last, a tall figure in gray—the figure of a man, broad-shouldered, muscular; a little nearer, and he saw the strong, quiet face.

The man on the boat looked at the man on the pier, steadily; and, presently, the man on the pier leaned down, and a speck of red which had stood out against his gray coat, detached itself, and proved to be the hat of the girl, who waved a welcome.

Then, a strange thing happened. The man on the boat, looking with disappointed eyes, beheld a young woman of heavy proportions, red-cheeked, double-chinned, dimpling with a smile of supreme content, the smile, as he mused bitterly, of the mediocre.

But the man on the pier, gazing with eyes of love, saw a being radiant—a girl all color and glow, a girl strong and alive and sweet-tempered; and he thanked God because the girl was his.



WHAT OF THE VICTORY?

PALE roses and pale leaves and little wings,
And all the silver flow of early light,
And all the lute-like notes the morning sings
Over the bier of night.

For night is past. Have I not fought my way
Out of the dark? Yet, here within the bright,
Imperious presence of celestial day,
I mourn—O God!—the night.

ZONA GALE.



HE—It makes me a better man to kiss you.
SHE—I want to help you all I can.



SOME self-made men have relieved the Lord of a great responsibility.

THREE YEARS AFTER

By Owen Oliver

WE were strolling toward the Sandsea jetty when I saw Nellie Redwood again, after three years. She was looking straight at us with her big, daring eyes, and I knew that she meant mischief. My wife saw nothing. She is blind.

"What is the matter, dear?" my wife asked. "You shivered as if you had met a ghost."

"Perhaps, I did!" It was useless to say that I was merely cold. She can read half of my thoughts with her finger-tips upon my arm.

"Is it anything you can tell me?"

"Something reminded me of a friend I have lost." Nellie was more than a friend.

"Ah, I know!" She pressed my arm in sympathy.

"Yes, dear," I said, "you know."

"You would not forget your friend, would you, Fred—even though it hurts you to remember?"

"No, dear," I said; "oh, no!" Sometimes, I think I would.

"Once, I had sad memories of friends; memories that *hurt*. But now—I have *you*!"

"Only me!"

"It is enough." She smiled up at me with her sightless eyes.

"I have you, and so many things. It should be easy to forget, or even to remember; but—" I paused.

"You do not wish to talk about it now?"

"No, not now." My eyes met Nellie's again as they followed us down toward the sea.

"You will tell me, some day?"

"Yes, dear, some day." Some day, I shall tell her—something else!

I lost sight of Nellie, and we walked along in silence. For two years, I had told myself that I had forgotten. It was a lie.

"I am tired, dear," said Agnes, when we turned back. "You want to be a little while alone. Take me in."

So, I took her in. Then, I came out again and walked down to the grove, at the end of the esplanade; and, there, I met Nellie.

"Well?" I asked. We did not trouble to shake hands. There was never any half-way with us.

"I thought you would come," she said, with a slight sneer. "You were always quick to understand. You remember!"

"Yes," I said, coldly, "I remember. What do you wish?" We walked along under the trees, in the dusk.

"That, I suppose, was your wife?"

"Yes. I should prefer that you confined yourself to me."

"Unfortunately, your wife is a factor in the matter."

"Then, I decline to discuss it."

"Would that be wise?"

"You are a she-devil," I said, passionately.

"Yes, I am. Whose fault is it?" Her eyes blazed at me, and a streak of moonlight danced in them, through the trees.

"Mainly," I answered, sullenly, "your own. But for your ungovernable temper——"

"Had my temper nothing to try it?" she demanded. "Was there nothing to wear the brightness out of me? Nothing to kill the goodness in me? Oh, yes! say there was none to kill. Say it was only *you*, instead of some one

else. Say it wasn't because I loved you that I— Oh, my God!" She turned her back upon me, and stopped, with one hand upon a seat.

"Nellie," I pleaded, "there is no mending the past. Let it be. We were both wrong——"

"My good saint!" she cried, scornfully. Her voice had hardened in these three years.

"We did wrong," I repeated, "and the fault was mine."

"Ah!" She gave a short, hurt gasp. Perhaps, her memory went back to a slight, soft-eyed girl, in a shady lane, winding down from the hill-top to the sea. Perhaps, she thought of the first shy kiss, and the timid clasp of a little hand. I remembered, and knew that there was no forgiveness for what I had done.

"I was faithful," I said, hoarsely, "until you left me." It was my only plea.

"Oh!" she cried, fiercely, "why doesn't God strike you dead as you stand? Faithful! You do not know what it means!"

"It means that I kept to you so long as you kept to me; that I bore with you, your wilfulness and passion—until you left me."

"Left you," she cried, "before you could cast me away."

"Nellie!" I was not so bad as *that*.

"Oh, you would have had some qualms of conscience, doubtless! You would have been magnanimous enough to pension me off!" She laughed, bitterly.

"How many times did I ask you to marry me?"

"Lip offers! If you had meant them——"

"I loved you; and you knew."

"I knew that, at the bottom of your heart, you despised me." I did not. "I knew that, some day, you would taunt me, as you did——"

"Once only," I protested.

"Once was too often."

I am but as other men. "Under what provocation? How often had you railed at me without answer?"

"Most good and just man," she

said, scornfully, "what made me rail?" It was the sin that we had sinned. I made no answer.

"Then," she went on, "because you loved—not *me*, but my pretty face—it is rather pretty still, don't you think?" She stopped under a lamp, and looked up at me, with her lips half-parted and her big eyes aglow. There never were such eyes.

"I am past temptation," I said, brutally; and she clenched her tiny, gloved hands.

"My good St. Anthony, you boast too soon." She smiled, and I bit my lip, angrily. She was prettier than ever, and no saint am I.

"It was the answer of a hopeless cad. I beg your pardon."

"Because," she continued, "you thought yourself a poor, soft-hearted fool to offer marriage to the girl you had ruined—I went away."

I might have told how I sought for her, how I failed to forget; but I thought of Agnes, and was silent.

"In our final quarrel—" she continued.

"I had no idea that it was final."

"I told you that, some day, I should make you suffer, as I had suffered. Now——" She laughed a subdued laugh.

"My feelings," I said, calmly, "are no longer at your command."

"They are, to some extent, at the command of your wife. I noticed, particularly"—there was a swift touch of scorn in her voice—"that you seemed devoted to your wife."

"I decline to discuss my wife."

"She will not decline to discuss you." I groaned, half-aloud. "You do not seem to relish the prospect."

"You are a fiend," I cried, "if you do not spare *her*."

"Oh, of course! I beg your pardon! She is on a pedestal above all others. She——"

"She has enough to bear," I said, quietly; "she is blind!"

"Blind!" There was a sudden compassion in Nellie's voice, and I hoped. She was always so tender to anything hurt or weak.

"She is blind; and she has no one but me."

"You loved her so much that you married her, in spite of her blindness?"

"Yes," I answered, firmly. Most surely I loved her; but there are different ways of loving.

"Then"—she set her lips firmly—"so much the better for my revenge!"

"Have you no mercy?"

"Do you deserve any?"

"Not for myself. I should not ask it. But my wife——"

"I decline to discuss your wife."

We walked along in oppressive silence, until we reached the cliffs. Then, I stopped.

"I will not go *there* with you," I said, sharply, "or I might be tempted." I made a passionate sweep with my arms, and she smiled.

"You would not harm me," she said, composedly, "and it would not matter much if you did."

She walked carelessly to the edge, and stood looking out at the sea for a couple of minutes—a weary little figure, dimly outlined against the sky. Then, she rejoined me, and we walked gloomily back. Once, when we passed the old fort, and the light straggled out from a casement, I thought there was a tear on her cheek. Once or twice—perhaps it was a dozen times—I was tempted to put my arm around her, to draw her close to me, and to say, "My poor little girl! I have loved you always; I love you still." She would fling herself into my arms, and cry; and I should kiss her. And then—there was my poor, blind wife, who trusted me. So, I said nothing—there was nothing to say—until we reached the grove, and she paused.

"Is there anything I can say or do to change you, Nellie?" I asked.

She looked in my eyes a long time; then, she shook her head. "Nothing."

I turned on my heel, and went. I fancied that the sound of a sob came to me through the dark, but I thought of Agnes, and walked swiftly on—so swiftly that I almost ran. But the echo of the sob followed me home and into my room, where was Agnes.

Yes, there was Agnes. I knew just what would happen when Nellie had told her. She would come and sit down by my side, and take my hand. She would look a long time at me with her unseeing eyes; and, then, she would ask me to tell her all. From a tone, a word, a movement, she would know that I did not love her as I had loved Nellie; and she would suffer.

The next afternoon, I went away, for a couple of hours, on business, leaving Agnes on a shady bench, in the hotel gardens, with an embossed book for company. She waved her hand, and smiled, until she thought I was out of sight; and I wondered if she would ever smile so happily again.

On my return, she was sitting in the same place. Nellie was beside her, and the servants had brought them out a table with some tea. I could hear Nellie's merry laugh before I saw them through the trees. There never was a sound so pleasant, I used to think. I think so still.

"Here is Fred," said Agnes, as my step drew near. "Fred, here is an old friend to see you; some one that you couldn't forget, I am sure."

Nellie rose and bowed, with a challenge in her eyes. "If you have forgotten me, you will have to know me again, Mr. Wynne," she said. "I have made friends with your wife."

I held her warm hand in mine for a few seconds—she had taken off her glove.

"Do you know, Miss Redwood, you are not easy to forget."

"Men are forgetful creatures!"

My wife shook her head. "Fred is not so bad—for a man," she said.

"Mr. Wynne is evidently a model man—to Mrs. Wynne!"

They smiled, and I looked from one to the other, gravely. I was wondering what the next scene of the play would be.

"Miss Redwood is coming to see me very often," Agnes announced; "so, I sha'n't be quite such a tie on you. Perhaps, too, she will let you take her for a walk sometimes, when you are

going too far for me. She tells me that she hasn't a cavalier here."

"That is difficult to believe!"

She bit her lips. "I never had but one real cavalier," she said, quietly; "and he—well, I shall tell you some day, Mrs. Wynne."

Her big eyes said many things, reminding, reproaching, threatening.

"I shall be very pleased if Miss Redwood will come," I said. What else could I say?

I sat down between them, and tried to talk; but, for once, words failed me, and the burden of the conversation fell on Nellie. She was always an interesting talker, and, in this respect, at any rate, her three years out in the world had improved her. She sketched the newest things in dress, and pricked them out with a pin for Agnes's entertainment. She was designer for a fashion-paper, she said. She told the story of the new comedy; and she explained the charm of the last problem play, in her impetuous, interested way.

"There is such ingenuity in the revenge," she proclaimed, enthusiastically. "Every one's savage instinct is pleased with an appropriate retribution!"

Agnes shuddered. "If I had written the play, I should have given up the revenge," she said, softly.

"Ah, you! You are good. Most people are half-savages; and the plot appeals to them—to people like Mr. Wynne"—she flashed a look—"and me!"

"Mr. Wynne is not a bit savage," protested Agnes. "And, my dear, I haven't known you long, but I don't think you are."

Nellie sighed. "Wait till you know me a little longer." Her look threatened me again.

At last, she went, and I saw her to the gate.

"You have relented, Nellie?" I asked; and, once more, she looked into my eyes.

"No," she said; "certainly not. I am seeking the most artistic revenge." Then, she tripped down the path, turn-

ing with a mocking smile to wave her hand. How pretty she was when she smiled, and how she attracted me still! If St. Anthony's lady had been Nellie—but, possibly, the story would not have been written.

The next day, Nellie came and talked for a couple of hours, and took my wife a little way along the esplanade; and, the day after, she read to her all the afternoon.

"I have never met a girl so bright and attractive as Nellie," Agnes told me, upon the third afternoon. "No one could possibly help liking her. It was lucky for me that you escaped her charm. I cannot think how you managed it."

I lighted a cigar, slowly, before answering. "Different things," I said, "attract different people."

"She is very pretty, too, isn't she? Yesterday, she let me pass my hands over her face, and I thought so."

"Yes," I answered, with assumed indifference; "oh, yes, I suppose she is pretty. Most people would say so."

"I am sure she is good," said Agnes, enthusiastically, waiting for confirmation.

"She used to be, when I knew her," I replied, with an effort. If I had never known her, she would have been good still!

"And very affectionate?"

"My dear girl," I answered, impatiently, "how should I know?"

Agnes looked at me in surprise. I am not often impatient with her. "I believe you are jealous of Nellie," she said, with a smile. "It is as absurd as—if I were!"

"Yes, dear, it is absurd." Nellie came up the path, and her eyes met mine. "Here is the rival," I said in a whisper.

"How are you, dear?" Nellie asked, taking my wife's hand; "I've come to talk to you, unless you send me away."

"I'm afraid I *must* send you away this afternoon," said Agnes; "I am so very tired." She is not strong. "Fred will amuse you, I dare say. Perhaps, you will let him take you along the cliffs."

"I shall be delighted," I said. On the surface of my mind, I hoped that Nellie would make an excuse. Somewhere, in the mysterious background, I longed for her to acquiesce.

"If Mr. Wynne would really like me to go—?" She paused.

"Of course, I should."

"Of course, he would," said Agnes. So, we went.

For the first mile, along the dreary sea wall, we were monosyllabic. Then, we came to the grassy cliffs, a hundred yards above the sea. The larks sang to us, the waves splashed to us, the corn waved to us, the wind blew upon us; and the clock of our lives seemed put back three years. For half an hour, we walked along, teasing and laughing, which was our way; then, we came to Mount Pleasant, where the path winds in among the trees, and, in the quiet shadows, we grew silent again.

"Can you think of revenge, now?" I whispered.

The smile faded from her lips, the light from her eyes.

"Can I forget?" she asked, "now?"

I looked at the trees and the birds, the fields and the sky, and shook my head. It was the time to remember.

"You may blame me as much as you like," she went on, "but——"

"I could not blame you, whatever you did to me."

"You couldn't," she said. "But Agnes——"

"Thinks you the best and kindest of women."

"And you the best and kindest of men."

"Perhaps, I have been——" I stopped.

"To her! What an argument to me!" Her face grew hard and bitter again.

We sat down on the trunk of a tree, and she looked, wistfully, at the sunny water showing here and there through the leaves. I rested my head upon my hand, and thought—it is my punishment to think—and the burden of my thoughts was that she suffered for the wrong I had done.

It had been the foolishness of a boy. Had I been older, I should have married her; had I been better, I should have worshiped her; had I been wiser—but I was none of these things. May God punish me as I deserve!

As she looked at the sea, her eyes were full of tears; and I had no right to comfort her. Surely, God would punish me; and my punishment was begun.

My punishment!—ah, but it was not all mine. There was Agnes; and there was Nellie—Nellie, whom I loved. Her face was quivering, and a big tear was rolling down her cheek. I put my arm around her, and drew her, passionately, to me!

When we passed back into the open ground, and ceased to hold hands, we were silent, and our silence lasted all the way home. Only, when we came into the garden, where Agnes sat smiling into vacancy, we looked at each other with steady eyes.

"It must end," I said, firmly.

"Yes; it must end."

So, I went indoors and left them together. Once, I looked at them from the window. Nellie's face was turned toward me, and I saw that it was white and drawn. When I had given them a long-enough time, I walked slowly down the garden.

"Oh, Fred!" said my wife, with tears in her eyes, "Nellie is going away—abroad."

"Oh, no!" I pleaded with my eyes.

"Yes," Nellie said, with trembling lips. "It is my duty; I must go." She took my wife's hand. "I have learned to love you, dear," she said.

Then, after a moment, she laughed, and brushed away the tears from her eyes; and we talked about other things. I do not think they mattered. I cannot remember what they were.

She stayed to dinner, and, in the dusk, I saw her home. In the shadow of the grove, I put my arm around her, and she held up her lips for one delirious moment. The recording angel must surely have overlooked it—knowing the rest.

"God bless you, Nellie—my dear, dear love!"

"God bless you, Fred!" She held tightly to me. "I—I—never meant it—my revenge—and now it is done."

We said good-bye, again and again; and, when, at last, she walked slowly away, my eyes followed her to the door, and tried to follow her within; and then it seemed to me that her avengement was only begun!



THE COUNTRY OF HEART'S DESIRE

WHERE goes the gold of vanished sunsettings?
 Is there some secret treasure-house in space,
 Where the lost glories of the west find place,
 Safe from the ruin that the darkness brings?
 And all the fleeting beauty of old Springs—
 The tremulous new purples, golden grace
 Of boughs a-budding—must time still efface,
 Or do they wait amid witholden things?

There is a kingdom past the sunset's fire,
 Washed by its splendors as a shining tide,
 Beating along its coasts forevermore.
 And pilgrims, setting sail from Day's dim shore,
 Find all lost dreams and loveliness abide
 In that far country of the Heart's Desire.

ARTHUR KETCHUM.



IN A FUTURE PORTRAIT GALLERY

MRS. GAZZAM—Who is this gigantic man in the strange-looking armor?
 He must have been one of the medieval heroes.

MRS. FAMBLEY-TREE—No, my dear; that is our most famous ancestor, Percy Rushline. He was killed in the Hale-Yarvard battle of 1947.



AMBIGUOUS

ASKINGTON—She has a rich husband, hasn't she?

TELLER—Yes; and at the same time a mighty poor one.



THE Creator denied woman a sense of humor that she might worship man,
 instead of laughing at him.

“MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB”

By St. John Hamund

As it might have been written by:

I

SWINBURNE

O BEAUTIFUL Maid of the Prairie, the Valleys, the Hills, or the Plain,
Oft-sung and oft-rhymed-upon Mary, for Babyhood's infinite gain,
Again, of thy charms evanescent, I sing in a strain that will last
Through the calm of an indolent Present, till the Future joins hands with the
Past,
And the Lamb that made Mary's life brighter and sweeter by night and by
day,
With a fleece that was fairer and whiter than snows on the far Himalay!
O life full of lisps and of laughter! O pride in each morning anew!
Where she went, there the Lamb followed after, unquestioning, faithful and
true!
And, though we may not know the sequel, what trials befell them at last,
Let us sing of the faith that is equal to the faith in the gods of the past!

II

LONGFELLOW

Lo! I sing of little Mary,
Little Mary with the Lambkin,
With the Lambkin white and woolly,
Fleece as white as snow, and whiter;
Everywhere he followed Mary,
Followed humbly after Mary,
Everywhere that Mary wandered,
Didn't matter where she wandered,
Miles and miles he followed Mary,
Till they both were sick and tired;
For the Lamb belonged to Mary,
Little Mary with the Lambkin:
That was why the Lambkin followed.
This is all I have to tell of
Mary and her little petlet.

III

WHITTIER

Young Mary, every Summer's day,
Would cross the meadow with footsteps gay.

THE SMART SET

And after her, gently, would amble, too,
A soft young Lamb of a snowy hue.

The Lamb was little, his fleece was white
As snow in the Winter sunshine bright.

And, through Life's trouble of toil and pain,
The Lamb would follow with might and main.

And the Lamb was sad, for, truth to tell, he
Would think of mint sauce, or currant jelly.

And Mary would often wonder whether
They'd always be coupled thus together.

But, alas! for the need of a nursery rhyme,
They'll be like that to the end of Time.

And they jog along on the same old scene,
And sigh for the story that might have been.

In the hereafter, some one may
Write the tale in another way.

IV

AUSTIN DOBSON

MARY a little Lamb had,
His fleece was as white as the snow.
I dare say that Mary was glad
Mary a little Lamb had,
For after her, merry or sad,
The Lamb would be certain to go.
Mary a little Lamb had,
His fleece was as white as the snow.

V

EDGAR ALLAN POE

It was deep in the month of November,
The time of the day it was noon—
I think I remarked 'twas November;
But maybe I wrongly remember—
It might have been August or June.
(I really believe it was June.)
And Mary! Ah, me! It was Mary
Whose pet was a Lamb, long ago.
(He's mutton now, long, long ago,
And eaten with relish by Mary!)
His fleece was far whiter than snow,
The wind-driven, dazzling snow!
And everywhere Mary went, there he
(The Lamb) would assuredly go—
I feel that is where he would go,
I'll bet that is where he would go!

VI

WALT WHITMAN

I SEE a beautiful scene.
 I see a young girl.
 She is Mary.
 I see her, tall, slim, young, fifteen years of age,
 Or, seeing that she is afterward mentioned as going to school, perhaps
 younger.
 Fourteen, then; or thirteen, even; or twelve, perhaps; or eleven, maybe.
 Or ten. Or nine.
 Yes, nine. That is the age.
 I see the well-turned ankle, the trim foot, the neat calf, the——
 But no, Walt Whitman, that is enough.
 All this I see.
 It is a beautiful picture.
 And she—she, too, is beautiful.
 Young men will court her, and, when she is grown up, marry her.
 (At least, one of them.)
 She will be the mother of healthy children.
 I see also the Lamb, young (as lambs are) faithful and white-wooled.
 (But if he—or she—for I do not know the sex—were black-wooled, or
 brown, or gray, then equally beautiful, equally soft, equally useful and suitable
 for the clothing of the respectable poor or the disreputable rich.)
 It, too, is beautiful.
 It follows Mary, ambling, gentle and affectionate.
 It is faithful, not from a sense of Duty (what has he—or she—to do with
 Duty?) of Thralldom, of subservience, but out of pure affection, such as I feel
 for you, Reader, whoever you are, or for all men.
 (Why should I not feel affection for all the world, whether King, President,
 Negro, Lamb, or Mary?)
 The Lamb is beautifully faithful.
 (I think I remarked this before, but no matter. Why should I not re-
 peat myself? I cannot worry my large brain with such trifles.)
 Probably, Mary feeds it. This is as may be.
 But this fact remains, great, overpowering, solemn, indisputable,
 That in whatever direction Mary's footsteps may tend,
 The Lamb takes that direction also.
 I leave the moral to you, Reader.
 I really cannot be bothered any more about it.



REALISM

MRS. JONLY—I declare! We bought that picture six months ago, and I
 have only just noticed that figure of a man fishing.
 MR. JONLY—The fishing season has only just opened, you know.



THERE are none so blind as those who see one of their creditors approaching
 them.

April 1903

SEMPER TYRANNUS

BECAUSE I loved you overmuch,
 Love set a seal upon my lips,
 That when I spoke, lo! there was naught
 To utter, save light jests and quips.

Because I trembled at your step,
 Love bade me seem indifferent,
 Yea, bade me seem as if my thoughts
 Were on some far-off wonder spent.

Because I longed to see your face,
 Love would not let me raise my eyes;
 And, when my heart told you were near,
 Commanded that I feign surprise.

Because you took me to your heart,
 At last Love gave me liberty
 Of speech and look and thought—and yet,
 Tenfold increased his tyranny!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



THE PREROGATIVE OF BEAUTY

MADGE—How do you know she thinks she's prettier than you?
 MARJORIE—I was with her in a car to-day, and when a gentleman gave
 up his seat to us she took it.



HIS SPECIALTY

LITTLE CLARENCE—Pa, what is a reformer?
 MR. CALLIPERS—He is a person, my son, who has very lofty ideals for
 other people to live up to.



WILLIE SLIMSON—Papa, tell me a fairy story.
 SLIMSON—But, Willie, I don't know any.
 WILLIE SLIMSON—That's strange. Mother says you tell them to her right
 along.

L'AMOUR DES BÊTES

Par Henri Lavedan

(De l'Académie française)

LE PÈRE—LA MÈRE—JEANNETTE, 20 ANS
Jeannette est en train de rêver dans sa chambre, avec un petit chien griffon sur les genoux et un petit chat blanc perché sur l'épaule, quand son père et sa mère entrent à la suite l'un de l'autre, graves et pas du tout à la plaisanterie.

JEANNETTE—C'est vous?

LE PÈRE—C'est nous!

LA MÈRE(*qui tient une lettre*)—Sais-tu ce que nous écrit Mme de Saint-Honneur?

JEANNETTE—Ma prochaine belle-mère?

LA MÈRE—Oui. Eh bien! d'abord, elle ne l'est plus, ta prochaine belle-mère. Elle nous écrit que ton mariage est rompu, qu'à la suite d'une conversation que vous avez eue, hier, son fils et toi, il est inutile de donner suite à des projets qui nous étaient chers à tous. Bref, c'est cassé! Ton père et moi, nous tenions beaucoup à ce mariage.

LE PÈRE—Moi surtout.

LA MÈRE—Nous sommes très vexés, et nous avons bien peur que ce qui arrive ne soit de ta faute; aussi venons-nous te demander ce que tout ça signifie.

LE PÈRE—Nous voulons des éclaircissements, des explications.

JEANNETTE—Mme de Saint-Honneur ne vous en donne donc pas dans sa lettre?

LA MÈRE—Oui et non; des phrases vagues auxquelles nous n'avons rien compris. "Incompatibilité d'humeur manifeste entre les deux jeunes gens." Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?

LE PÈRE—Vous paraissiez vous plaire beaucoup, au contraire?

JEANNETTE—J'y suis!

LE PÈRE—Ah! ça n'est pas dom-

LA MÈRE—Dites-nous vite.

JEANNETTE—C'est à cause des bêtes.

LE PÈRE—Hé?

LA MÈRE—Quelles bêtes?

JEANNETTE—Les bêtes—mes bêtes—toutes les bêtes en général et en particulier.

LA MÈRE—Qu'est-ce qu'elles ont à voir dans ton mariage?

JEANNETTE—Oh! énormément; laissez-moi vous raconter.

LA MÈRE—Je flaire encore quelque sottise de toi, ma pauvre petite enfant; ton amour immodéré des animaux nous a déjà fait avoir bien des ennuis.

LE PÈRE (*à sa fille*)—Va. (*A sa femme*) Ne l'interromps pas.

JEANNETTE—C'était hier la première fois que M. de Saint-Honneur était autorisé à me faire régulièrement sa cour, et vous avez été assez gentils pour nous laisser un peu seuls, aller et venir dans l'appartement; comme vous me connaissez, vous pensez bien que je n'ai rien eu de plus pressé que de lui parler des bêtes et de lui demander s'il les aimait.

LE PÈRE—Ça devait lui causer une bien douce joie, cette question-là!

LA MÈRE—Oui, pour un fiancé! Es-tu maladroite, ma chère enfant!

LE PÈRE (*à sa fille*)—Qu'est-ce qu'il t'a répondu?

JEANNETTE—Il m'a dit qu'il ne les détestait pas.

LE PÈRE—Eh bien! c'est très gentil, tout ce qu'il faut.

JEANNETTE—Moi, j'ai trouvé ça mou; je lui ai proposé de lui montrer les miennes.

LA MÈRE—Tes quoi?

JEANNETTE—Mes bêtes, donc!

LA MÈRE—Quelle idée lui as-tu donnée de toi!

JEANNETTE—Il a accepté très poli-

ment. Je lui ai tout montré, je lui ai fait faire la connaissance de mon petit monde. Il a vu Bellotte, le chat Pata-pon, ma caille, ma tourterelle, mes trente oiseaux des Iles, mes poissons rouges et la tortue Olympe. Il a même pris Olympe dans sa main et il lui a dit deux ou trois mots aimables qui ont été perdus parce qu'Olympe était toute drôle, hier. J'avais remarqué ça dès le matin; elle penchait sa petite tête à gauche. Elle a quelque chose de pas naturel.

LE PÈRE—Abrège, abrège; laisse là Olympe!

LA MÈRE—Il me semble qu'il a été charmant, ce jeune homme; bien d'autres, à sa place, n'auraient pas eu tant de complaisance.

JEANNETTE — Attends, maman—Après cette visite, je lui ai parlé très nettement de mon amour des bêtes.

LE PÈRE—Pour changer!

JEANNETTE—Et je me suis montrée à lui sous mon vrai jour: ridicule, ennuyeuse, vieille fille, mère-aux-chiens, bête moi-même à la folie; enfin, j'ai été très franche, et je lui ai avoué que telle j'étais, telle il fallait me prendre ou me laisser, parce que j'étais incurable et que tous ceux qui avaient essayé de me guérir y avaient perdu leur français.

LE PÈRE—Qu'est-ce qu'il disait, pendant ce temps-là?

JEANNETTE—Il m'écoutait en pâlis-sant.

LA MÈRE—Pauvre garçon! il t'aimait peut-être beaucoup, et alors il devait bien souffrir!

JEANNETTE—Il guérira, console-toi. Quand je suis arrivée à la fin de ma confession, je lui ai donc déclaré en deux points: "Ainsi, monsieur, je ne vous prends pas en traître, et je vous pose mes conditions. Si vous m'aimez, et si vous tenez vraiment à ce que je sois Mme de Saint-Honneur, il faut me laisser adorer les bêtes grotesquement, sans limites, puisque c'est ma maladie, et en plus de ça, il faut que vous les aimiez vous-même et ne jamais me contrarier ni me faire de peine sur ce chapitre-là. Un dernier mot: j'emporte avec moi ma

petite ménagerie, cela va de soi. Pour rien au monde, je ne laisserais à la maison tous ces pauvres petiots." C'est ici—je dois dire—c'est à ce moment-là que j'ai senti qu'il faiblissait et que le calice lui devenait amer: "Vous voulez que nous ayons tout ça chez nous?" "Tout ça, oui, monsieur; réfléchissez donc bien." Il a souri et m'a répondu d'un air très aimable: "Oh! c'est tout réfléchi, mademoiselle," comme si ça voulait dire qu'il consentait. Mais, moi, je me doutais bien déjà que son parti était pris et qu'il ne voulait plus ni de moi, ni de mes insectes. Et vous voyez que je ne me trompais pas, puisque, ce matin, sa bonne mère nous donne nos huit jours.

LE PÈRE—C'est tout?

JEANNETTE—C'est tout.

LE PÈRE—Alors, ça n'est pas bien grave—et tout peut se rearranger.

JEANNETTE—Comment ça?

LE PÈRE—Tu renonceras à tes bêtes, voilà tout.

JEANNETTE—Moi—! Renoncer—les abandonner! Jamais!

LE PÈRE—Écoute-moi.

JEANNETTE—Pour qu'elles meurent toutes! Oh!

LE PÈRE — Veux-tu m'écouter, soupe au lait! Tu les laisseras ici; on en aura grand soin.

JEANNETTE—Qui ça? C'est peut-être toi qui donneras à manger à genoux à Olympe? C'est peut-être toi qui prendras la tourterelle dans ton lit?

LE PÈRE—Non. Bien sûr, ce ne sera pas moi. Mais—

JEANNETTE—Qui, alors?

LE PÈRE—Les domestiques.

JEANNETTE—C'est ça! Jamais! Je ne me marierai pas! Je ne veux pas me marier! Qu'on me laisse tranquille!

LA MÈRE—Tu oublies que ce mariage était très avancé?

JEANNETTE—Il reculera; il a déjà reculé.

LE PÈRE—Que tu as reçu ta bague?

LA MÈRE—Une perle admirable!

JEANNETTE—Je la renverrai.

LA MÈRE—Enfin, tu nous con-

traries énormément. On est jeune fille ou on ne l'est pas. C'est très gentil d'aimer les animaux, mais il ne faut pas non plus que ça dépasse les bornes pour tomber dans la folie!

JEANNETTE — Grondez-moi, vous avez raison; mais si c'est une manie, elle est bien innocente, et ça ne fait de mal à personne.

LE PÈRE — Si, ça te fait du mal à toi, que ça empêche de trouver un mari.

JEANNETTE — Je n'en chercherai même plus.

LA MÈRE — Mais nous en cherchons pour toi.

JEANNETTE — Alors, trouvez-en un qui ait mes goûts — mes mauvais goûts, mes faiblesses, si vous voulez — mais trouvez-le. Sans cela, je coifferai sainte Catherine jusqu'aux épaules. Et je resterai seule avec ma ménagerie.

LA MÈRE — Tu n'es qu'une méchante enfant gâtée! On a pourtant cédé à tous tes caprices, voyons? Tu as d'abord désiré un chien, on te l'a donné; après, tu as rêvé d'un angora.

LE PÈRE — On te l'a donné. Trente francs je l'ai payé à l'Exposition des chats. Et il déchire tous les rideaux!

JEANNETTE — Aussi je vous aime bien.

LE PÈRE — Successivement, tu as eu des oiseaux. Des petits, des gros, et de toutes les couleurs. Une tortue aussi. Tout ce que tu as voulu, enfin!

JEANNETTE — Je suis si heureuse! Et puis, non, pas tout ce que j'ai voulu. Rappelez-vous le grand "danois"?

LE PÈRE — Oh! ne remets pas cette histoire-là sur le tapis.

JEANNETTE — Mon grand César que mon oncle m'avait donné pour mes étrennes. Vous m'avez forcée de le vendre au bout de huit jours! Il était si beau, si doux!

LA MÈRE — Si doux! Tu sais bien pourquoi on t'en a privée? Il a failli dévorer dans l'escalier la grand'mère du propriétaire.

JEANNETTE — C'est elle qui a eu peur, qui s'est laissée glisser comme une sottie, et qui a dégringolé dix-huit marches.

LE PÈRE — Oui, et quand on est accouru au bruit, on a trouvé ton César

qui s'apprêtait à mettre en lambeaux la pauvre bonne femme évanouie.

JEANNETTE — C'est faux! Il la retenait! Sans lui, elle déboulina tout l'escalier, et elle n'a pas eu une égratignure! Oh! je ne me consolerais jamais de César!

LE PÈRE — Laissons César.

JEANNETTE — C'est comme pour le singe!

LA MÈRE — Oh! ça jamais! tant que tu seras à la maison, tu n'auras pas de singe!

LE PÈRE — Regarde autour de toi, dans la société: les jeunes filles n'ont pas de singe.

LA MÈRE — Tu en auras un quand tu seras mariée.

JEANNETTE — Mais non; j'en ai justement parlé, hier, à M. de Saint-Honneur.

LE PÈRE — Tu lui as parlé d'un singe?

JEANNETTE — Oui, et il a fait une tête!

LE PÈRE — Comment lui as-tu dit la chose? Je tremble!

JEANNETTE — "Monsieur, je dois vous faire un aveu: j'ai toujours désiré ardemment avoir un singe; mes parents n'ont jamais voulu y consentir, et ils m'ont toujours dit: 'Attends d'avoir un mari, tu en auras un.'"

LE PÈRE (*éclatant de rire*) — Tu — tu lui as dit ça dans ces termes-là?

JEANNETTE — Oui.

LA MÈRE (*suffoquée*) — Mais c'était d'une grossièreté! Ah, bien! je ne m'étonne plus si ton mariage est dans l'eau!

LE PÈRE (*riant*) — Non, c'est trop drôle! Embrasse-moi, tiens, je t'adore! Et puis, chéris tes bêtes, et le plus que tu pourras, ma fille! Tu es parfaite pour le reste. Il y a encore de pires défauts. Par exemple, tu m'aimeras plus que la tortue?

JEANNETTE — Autant.

LA MÈRE (*avec un soupir*) — Ah! que ton père est faible! Si c'était moi qui aimais les bêtes!

LE PÈRE (*à sa fille*) — Et puis, ne te tracasse pas. Nous te trouverons un mari, en nous promenant, au Jardin d'Acclimatation. Un bon jeune homme, avec du pain de seigle. Nous te trouverons ça!

"SOMETHING STIRS IN THE HEART OF MAN"

SOMETHING stirs in the heart of man
 Who can voice it in words?
 Something swiftly breaks into bloom,
 In the tuneful time of birds!

Something comes from the cloudless blue,
 Dearer than wealth or fame;
 Something gladdens the soul of man—
 Who can give it a name?

Something comes with the early leaf,
 Comes when the Spring wind blows;
 Something tender and strangely sweet
 Buds with the budding rose.

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.



THERE ARE OTHERS

WILL—What do you think of that idiot, Sam Clay? He always answers
 a question by asking another.

BILL—Does he?



THE UNATTAINABLE

WAGGLES—That simple little invention of his made his backer a millionaire.
 JAGGLES—I suppose he's now trying something harder?

WAGGLES—I should say so. He's trying to make something out of the
 millionaire.



SUCCESS

"WELL, Mrs. Highblower ought to be content now, having succeeded in
 getting her daughters placed."

"What! has she——?"

"Yes; they are all richly and unhappily married."

THE JUDGMENT OF PEAVY

By Tom P. Morgan

WHILE the brand of justice administered by old Squire Peavy, a somewhat moss-grown, but eminently astute, Arkansas justice of the peace, may not be quite as ornate as that in use farther north, it is always exceedingly applicable to the exigency at hand. Witness, now, his action in the case recently brought before him, wherein the defendant, Miss Lulabelle Uckleston, was charged with the crime of snatching a saucepan of hot blackberry juice from off the stove in her mother's kitchen, in the town of Polkville and County of Shellback, and unlawfully, feloniously and with malice intent, flinging and throwing the said hot blackberry juice on the person of one Bump Jarlick, from whose neck, left shoulder and so forth, the skin or cuticle did, in consequence, soon thereafter peel and shuck off, to his great mental and physical anguish, and contrary to the form of the statutes in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the state of Arkansas.

When the complaint had been duly recited, the squire began to pry into the matter with shrewd questions, and he soon developed the following facts, to-wit:

The plaintiff had been in love with the defendant, but had kept his passion locked up in his system till it had expanded beyond his containing. In desperation, therefore, he had at last tallowed his Sunday boots, and sought the defendant's presence, finding her in the kitchen as aforesaid, canning blackberries. The first knowledge she had had of his proximity was

when he protruded his head through the open window behind her, and agitatedly bellowed that he loved her. In her surprise and perturbation, she mechanically turned and threw a saucepanful of the scalding juice on him, as in the complaint duly set forth.

The charge had been brought at the instigation not of the plaintiff himself, but of his doting mother, who assumed that the whole thing was a put-up job to scald and skin her offspring. The document itself had been concocted and prepared by the plaintiff's cousin, who was afflicted with a large volume of "Every Man His Own Attorney." The plaintiff, in spite of everything, still loved the defendant with all his zeal, and was sorry he had been befuddled into the prosecution. The defendant had theretofore thought well of the plaintiff, and still considered him more sinned against than sinning.

"Ar-r-r-r—hum!" commented the justice, at this point. "First and foremost, to sorter clear the atmosphere, I fine the plaintiff's legal adviser ten dollars for contempt of court, and——"

"Aw, come now, squire," broke in the writer of the complaint; "you can't do that!"

"I can't, har?" questioned the justice. "Young man, I gave a feller thirty days, last Summer; and his lawyer visited him and told him I couldn't possibly put him in jail on any such charge; and the feller replied that it would take a heap-sight smarter lawyer than that'n to convince him that he wasn't in jail, right then. When I was younger and more excitable than

I am at present, I reversed the supreme court itself more than once, let me tell you!"

"But, squire, I hain't shown any contempt for this court, and——"

"Young man, this court is always an object of contempt to anybody that monkeys up a complaint like that, and drags it in yere just to show what he can do! I, tharfore, fine you, as before specified, for contempt of court, but suspend execution of the judgment durin' good behavior; but don't let me ketch you doin' it again! Secondly,

this court declares that thar ain't any law on the statute books of the state of Arkansas forbiddin' anybody to fling hot blackberry juice on anybody else. In the third place, I sentence the plaintiff to marry the defendant forthwith, providin' the defendant is willin' to blight her life by throwin' herself away on a fool. And, fourthly and finally, this court stands ready to perform the weddin' ceremony with neatness and despatch, for two dollars in cash, corn or stove-wood. Court is now adjourned."



LOVE'S ITINERARY

"LET me in," clamored Love, knocking at the door of a silly girl's heart.
Open flew the door.

"Welcome, thrice welcome!" cried the maiden.
Whereupon, off flew Love.

"Let me in," Love cried, knocking at the door of a selfish woman's heart.
"Prove first that thou art Love," she demanded.
Love showed her his blind eyes.

Convinced, she drew him in, and immediately bolted the door.
Being imprisoned, Love abided until his ally,
Opportunity, arrived, when away he sped.

"Let me in," pleaded Love, knocking at the door of a clever woman's heart.
She laughed, and sent him away.

Again he knocked; again she refused him admittance.
Many times, he strove to enter, before she opened the door to him.

"This door will always be open," she said, pleasantly.
Hearing this, Love stayed.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM.



AT THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

MANAGER—Did you say you wanted a second girl?
MRS. DIMPLETON—No; this is about the two thousandth.

THE CHIME

By Kate Masterson

FORNEY was kneeling before the safe in the library, looking for certain papers which he intended to take with him. His sojourn in the North Woods, that he had longed for ever since a boy, would require ample provision in the way of money, and he was turning his assets into gold, that he was to carry about him on a leather belt, capable of containing an unlimited amount of coin, reachable in times and places when he was far from cities, bankers and telegraph wires.

The trip had a touch of adventure that appealed to him. His desire was to get away from his present life, to seek a new identity—new life, perhaps new happiness—happiness of a different sort from that which he had dreamed of, but a happiness that would make good substitute for the dreary sham of existence in this big, marble mansion, filled with servants and the noise of his wife's musicales.

His life, under the same roof with her, had grown intolerable. Each was coldly tolerant of the other, replying before servants with studied courtesy. Both were of the school that learns how necessary it is to keep a fair face toward the world, and silence scandal with a smile. But his wife had this thing that she called her Art to content her, and the group of odd things it brought in its train.

He had nothing but his cases of carved stones and scarabs, and, after all, he was a man—not old—and these had ceased to content him. His absence would only be construed as another of his eccentricities. He frequently fled from the joys of town for

trips in strange lands, where he sought for engraved gems that had ringed the fingers of long-tombed kings.

His wife was well provided for. His presence meant nothing to her, and, when, a day or two ago, he had spoken casually of his trip, she had looked at him across the table as though not quite understanding, while the butler stifled a sigh under his waistcoat. For butlers often have intelligence of things, despite all their solemn demeanor.

She would be surrounded by the society of the studios, which courted her and paid homage to her Art—her Art—that had displaced him more completely than could any lover. He hated it, and he hated these people whom it brought into his house, to sit among his tapestries and leathers that he understood, although he had his hair cut occasionally and had his clothes made by a good tailor. The flowing fit that the artistic temperament affects, he abhorred. He was, you see, very narrow in view, as one is who has been brought up in a finger-bowl.

He was a studious, reserved, old-young man, with conservative blood in his veins, unemotional of race, repressed, correct, analytic and old-fashioned. But he happened to love his wife, and, with a sensitiveness that, when it occurs in men, seems always akin to weakness, he had allowed her to choose her path, and calmly acquiesced to circumstances that a man less proud and less courtly would have overruled.

But, now, the end had come, and he was going off, like a desperado, in search of wild adventure, that would take the sight of her face from his eyes and the

scent of her sachet from his nostrils. A whiff of it came now, from the papers that he was unfolding for a glance, before placing them in a black pocket-book on the desk before him.

It came from a folded slip of thin, foreign paper. On it, in her handwriting, was the translation of a French song that they had both sung in Paris together, the year they had met. The date in the corner of the paper was the date of their wedding, and, staring at it, his eye went to the silver calendar on the desk, and he noted that it was the same day of the year. And he had absolutely forgotten!

A sudden memory flooded him with thoughts of that Summer, eight years ago, when he had met her, a music-student, piquant, charming, debonaire, free and wild as a bird, the very opposite to him—a calm, quiet, reserved young man, who prowled about odd shops, looking for curios. They met, and he loved her, and revered the mysterious talent she possessed, without ever understanding it.

And she, with the contradictoriness of woman-genius, rather worshiped his differences from the Art crowd. She felt that he had depths, but they remained deep to her, and repelled her. His studious ways seemed almost a slight, while her violin and the companionships it brought her became unbearable to him. Then, pride grew up between them, like a tree, and they lingered in its shadow without ever the sunlight of a smile showing through the branches.

He grew to hate these men who sat at her feet, and looked at her while she played. He hated them most because they were men of her sort—that is, they all did things—painted pictures and wrote and acted and made music of their own. He knew he was without the circle, and he chose to remain so.

When he heard them talk, one afternoon at a tea, it sounded like a farce on a stage—their raptures and their attitudes savored of an exaggerated and somewhat vulgar pose. Their clothes, their hairy splendor, their queer collars,

appalled him. And the women, who were happily few, were even more mysterious to him. He had no humor, and, when he learned that these people were really notable in their callings, with names on fence-posters and circulars, he resolved within him that it was no use. He was without the pale. One could not buy temperament, as his wife once told him.

The little slip of paper in his hand brought it all back, and, as he read the words, he heard an odd sound from below, like a bell. Then, he listened, and he knew that his wife was playing—playing something he understood this time—the very song, the words of which he now read. It was an odd coincidence, for they had both liked this song.

And, as she played it, improvising variations on the melody, he found himself repeating the words, and pausing for the odd bell note that gave the song its name, "The Chime." They had heard it played in a restaurant the very evening that, in their stupid boy-and-girl way, they had been married.

Oddly enough, this was the first time he had heard her play it on the violin, and it was the first time that he had ever understood her music. He spoke the words slowly, while she played:

"Oh, restless little chime,
It never changed, but rang its roundelay
For each dark hour of that unhappy time
That sighed itself away!

"And ever—more and more—
Its burden grew, of his lost self a part,
And mingled with his memories and wore
Its way into his heart!"

For whom could she be playing that song? Was it, perhaps, for the greasy Polish tenor, or, maybe, the fat poetess of passion—those temperament ones who could understand things like this! He could picture her standing on the low dais, her cheek upon the old violin, and those queer people crouched about in the attitudes they affected.

"Of all that ever heard
And loved it for its sweetness, none but I
Divined the clue that, as a hidden word,
The notes doth underlie!"

He waited for the burst of soft applause, the delighted bravas that always followed the pause, and even penetrated, through the closed doors of his study, to him on the floor above. But after the pause came only the clear chiming note—again—again—like a bell-buoy upon the sea at night.

"Yet must I not unfold

Forevermore, nor whisper, late or soon,
The secret that a few slight bars thus hold
Imprisoned in a tune!"

The butler came in, opening the door, and, at a glance from his master,

he left it ajar. The music swelled now, clearly, grandly, strong.

"Who is playing?" he asked.

"Mrs. Forney, sir."

"Ah! In the music-room?"

"Yes, sir, in the music-room—alone!"

The man went out, his face expressionless, but his atmosphere was oddly eloquent, as though he, too, understood this music.

Forney smiled grimly at the thought, and, trembling, groped his way to the stairway leading down to her.



OUTSIDE

BETWEEN bright heaven and me, a door stood wide,
And I could plainly see—yea, almost touch—
The perfect bliss within; but, while I gazed,
Heard the rich chords, and breathed the glad, free air,
Fate threw her gleaming shuttle 'thwart the way,
And in its track there hung a golden thread,
As slender as the dainty film that spans
The woodland path some sultry Summer day,
Which we have broken ere we knew 'twas there.
No angel with a flaming sword forbade
My entrance to that paradise; no iron bars
Opposed my strength; only this floating film.
Ever must I my yearning feet repress,
For that frail thread is thy dear happiness.

CLINTON BURGESS.



A MATTER OF NECESSITY

BRIGGS—What did you change tailors for?
GRIGGS—I needed some new clothes.



TREASON

"**W**ELL, old chap, were you sorry to leave Lunnon?"
"Cawn't say I was, old fellow. Beastly fog, ye know."
"Deah me! Why, you'll be pwaising Amewica next!"

FRENCH DANCING GAMES

LIKE a whirl of rose leaves, sent
 From some sunny element,
 Rose leaves blossomed in a dream
 Of the far-off Old Régime,
 Are these games the children play
 On this leaden London day.
 In the dismal street without,
 Torches splutter, cabmen shout;
 For the fog is lying grim
 On the town, so tired and dim.
 Here, within the joyous room,
 They are dancing down the gloom!
 On the Bridge at Avignon,
On y danse tout en rond,
 Or a blindman's buff they sing,
 Stately in its rollicking;
 Or, like courtiers, small and staid,
 They surround some little maid,
 Who must guess some tiny riddle
 While she kneels there in the middle!
 All the delicate, old grace
 Of old Gaul returns apace!
 Child, I seem a child again,
 On the wide Alsatian plain;
 Child, I, too, am playing now,
 Your fair hair round my young brow,
 Mine your true blue eyes, for you
 Are an Alsace child all through!
 Little children, I'd delight
 In your games this Winter night.
 For, again, the lizards shoot
 O'er the great horse-chestnut's root;
 And, again, I see them stop
 On the fountain's lichened top,
 In that grove which was to me
 Play-ground, church, and mystery!

VICTOR PLARR.



HE—Isn't it close here?
 SHE—Well, I have felt it closer.



THE world is like a great hotel—kept in a perpetual bustle by arrivals and departures.

AT FRIGHTFUL HAZARD

By Cecil Charles

“YOU prefer a white gown, then, Herberta?”

“Why, of course, mama. I thought we——” The sharp young voice ceased, suddenly. The girl’s eyes had met her mother’s. Mrs. Hollis’s smile froze on her lips.

“Very well, dear; I thought you might have reconsidered. White is certainly very becoming to you.” She seemed to shiver. “The morning air is bracing,” she murmured.

The Gelston carriage rolled rapidly down the road, through the quiet town, toward the station. Under the leafless trees, the vivid green of lawns was yet unaltered. Mrs. Hollis’s gaze turned from the coachman’s back to sweeps of level emerald. She was preoccupied, and the girl saw it.

The two were alike and unlike. Analyzed, Herberta had no great beauty beyond her complexion. Should that grow faded or leathery, she must write her “finis,” as she had more than once said to her mother. Mrs. Hollis had never had such delicate tints to lose. She was several shades darker than her daughter, with very brown, instead of golden-chestnut, hair; they both had short, small features and deep-set eyes. In her twenty-second year, Herberta was still a little angular for evening dress.

As they approached the town centre, there was a whirring sound audible back of them in the distance. Mrs. Hollis’s glance flashed about and met her daughter’s.

“Only Coolbaugh,” said the girl, with a shrug.

“I thought it might be——” The

mother was holding her cheek tightly with her palm.

“Have you a toothache?” Herberta asked.

Mrs. Hollis dropped her hand, and tried again to smile. “The sound at first reminded me of the dentist—the little wheel to polish off the gold filling, you know.”

Herberta laughed, lightly. The din grew greater; the auto overtook and passed them, stirring the dust faintly for their pathway; then, it rounded a curve and was out of sight. Again the elder lady seemed to tremble.

“You should have brought a heavier wrap,” the girl remarked. “Coolbaugh is going down early. Mortie Waterman wouldn’t get up at such an hour for a fortune.”

Mrs. Hollis breathed, audibly. “A fortune being no especial temptation to one with his income.”

Herberta was silent a moment. “Will you return early, mama?” she finally asked.

“I hope to finish before five. I shall see our man of affairs first. I have your necklace with me.”

Herberta’s face whitened a little. “I hope they will set the stones securely, this time,” she said.

“I hope so.” There was something spasmodic in Mrs. Hollis’s utterance. The coachman drove carefully across the trolley-track and up the station slope. In the long waiting-room, there was an atmosphere of chill; to escape it, the ladies emerged quickly on the further platform.

“How few are going down!” said Herberta.

"Very few," her mother assented. "The birds of Summer are flown. Happy birds, who have somewhere to fly to!" she added, bitterly.

"Mama," said Herberta, tremulously, "it can't be so bad. We haven't lost everything?"

"We have had little to lose for some time."

"But, surely—the West End avenue house——"

"It will be impossible to stave off foreclosure another day."

"Hart must know some way——"

"Hart cannot work miracles."

"And the property in Fifty-second street——?"

"I thought you knew that was gone."

"What are we going to do, mama?"

"Heaven only knows!" They faced each other, fearfully. "There is nothing for the present but to bridge over a few days longer. The necklace is a last resource. The interest will be terrible, but—you must have more than one gown. Our visit here can last another fortnight. Jane particularly asked us to remain until her aunt's return." She paused, and quickly steadied herself. "Through all these weeks, I have been hoping desperately for something to happen—for your sake. For myself, it doesn't matter so much. I have had my day. There are things I could do. I shouldn't mind, even, if I had to live like Marian Murray, in a cheap apartment."

"Oh!" said Herberta, with a soul-sick accent.

"But the thought of taking you into such surroundings! I would rather die."

"What are we going to do?" the girl repeated.

"Nothing, I fear. I did hope you could care for Waterman."

"He has not asked me to marry him," Herberta said, desolately.

"With a little encouragement, a word or glance— But I have never urged you."

The girl looked away. Coolbaugh's automobile was grinding carefully

down the slope to the road; the chauffeur sat erect under the eye of the master he had just set down. It was a heavy traveling machine; Mrs. Hollis and her daughter had often agreed they preferred Mortie Waterman's, with its brighter red and three great lamps. Mortie had never had an accident. What he had spent for his machine and the cost of importation would have paid off some one of their numerous second mortgages, Herberta vaguely imagined. There was little out of the reach of young Waterman.

She turned back again. "His mother would never allow him."

"He is of age."

"But he is devoted to his mother."

"An admirable trait; but, she being absent——"

"That is just it, mama. If she had been here, he never would have been so attentive."

"Still, Herberta, as Mortie's wife, you could, perhaps, win her——"

"You mean, if we were to elope?"

"I mean nothing so—terrible. I mean nothing—I think of nothing but the frightful position we are in: the Winter before us, everything gone!"

"His mother is coming down, to-day or to-morrow," the girl said, hopelessly.

"Yes; her sister must have recovered. Isn't that the train? Waiting makes me so nervous! I think I had better get a half-yard more than we figured. It may be the last for a long while." Her voice choked.

"Don't give up yet, mama." The girl forced a smile. "Thousands of people live in apartments. I could learn to cook, and all that."

"I should beg Jane to keep you for a time, as companion."

"It wouldn't last, mama. Mrs. Gelston is too young a widow."

Mrs. Hollis was quiet, as if another blow had been dealt her. "I shall see Hart, first of all," she said, at length; "but it will be useless. I know how he will smile and say he is 'so sorry.'"

"He is a villain."

"Not at all. He has been warning me for a year."

"If Mortie Waterman *should* say anything," began Herberta, with a sob, "I shall not think about his mother. She would never like any one he married. Mrs. Gelston says so. Mrs. Gelston thinks as I do about her having a regular old bulldog face."

"Herberta! The poor lady cannot help her face. There must be good in her. Mortie has excellent traits. Had other things been equal, I might have gladly consented. You would have been the envied one of all our set. An elopement is a terrible thing; besides, eloping couples are always making such dreadful mistakes—like ringing up a clergyman at midnight, and then discovering they have no license, when it would be so perfectly easy to slip over the line into New York state, where nothing of the sort is needed. As if there were not ministers enough——"

"Mama, the train!" Herberta was trembling.

"Well, good-bye, my love. Be especially prudent and careful in conduct. I am sorry Jane is away. You will be so—unchaperoned." She kissed her daughter, as the engine thundered past them. Herberta stood watching her as she climbed aboard. Mrs. Hollis smiled reassuringly through the window. The train moved off.

There was something soothing in the motion of the car. Mrs. Hollis felt steadier of nerve, when she alighted in the great station, after her hour's ride. She hurried out through the swarming crowds, and found a cab. To the last, she would avoid the ignominy of traveling in street-cars. It seemed, too, as if fortune might be about to smile again upon her, for the cab never once was blocked, but arrived at the office of her man of affairs quite promptly. Hart, for a wonder, was already there. She found she could converse with him unmovedly about the foreclosure.

"I have always thought it idle to cry over spilled milk," she said; and

he agreed. Privately, he admired her nerve, and as it was not his property that was going to ruin, it cost him no effort to smile.

The interview was not prolonged. Mrs. Hollis had wrought herself up to a certain pitch of buoyancy. Who knew what a day might bring forth? Jane Gelston absent, only the servants in the house besides Herberta. Similarly, at the Waterman place on the neighboring hill, only servants besides Mortie Waterman. A romantic young suitor and a persuadable girl; also, a splendid automobile!

"Well," said Hart, as Mrs. Hollis reached the door, "there is nothing like being philosophical. I did struggle to save that West End avenue house, but the mortgagee was too much for me, and I couldn't scheme around. Seems he has a deal in view with a broker, who wishes to get it to add on to the adjoining property. These big holders want to gobble everything. It belongs to the Watermans, you know."

Mrs. Hollis's head spun. She took another step forward. "Watermans?" she repeated. "Indeed! Well, good morning, Mr. Hart."

She had not kept the cab, and, when she reached the street, she set off at a rapid pace, walking whither she knew not. "Oh, Herberta!" she gasped. "If you knew!"

She had walked for twenty minutes when she recovered her senses. Fortunately, she had gone in the right direction, or, at least, not greatly out of the way she should have taken, and soon she came to the office of the broker who was to make her an advance on the necklace. Instantly, it occurred to her to obtain a rather larger sum than she had at first planned. The game was for large stakes.

From the broker's office, she went to luncheon. She hesitated between two very fashionable resorts, and, finally, chose the more exclusive and expensive one. She hoped that some one might report it to Mrs. Waterman. If anything unusual should transpire, she desired the most positive proof that she had no part in it. She delayed

over her luncheon, although she knew she must spend much time in the shops; and, at last, she was rewarded by encountering a friend who was a favorite of Mrs. Waterman's sister. With her, she lingered still longer to chat, airily.

"Yes, we have had delightful weeks of rest at Mrs. Gelston's. And now? Oh, Herberta is in retreat. Positively, she is in rags! I am in town to shop for her. Indeed, if she had been fit to be seen, I would have made her do her part. It is so trying to shop alone! I hear Mrs. Frost is better. I believe Mrs. Waterman has opened her house up there—I have a faint recollection of some one saying so. The young man? One saw very little of him. He is absorbed with one of those murderous autos. I should dislike a young son of mine to keep such a toy. I really must run; the days are so short now. Adieu!"

It was close on five o'clock when Mrs. Hollis ran through the marble-floored waiting-room of the station, her ticket in one hand, in the other her wrist-bag, which she might not trust to its chain. She had bought many things, and spent much money, but a trifle still remained. She was anxious to reach home. She must not miss the train; the carriage would be down to meet her. Mrs. Gelston might have returned; other "nights" set her heart fluttering.

She hastened on, too tensely wrought to perceive anything or any one. There was just one seat providentially awaiting her, and she sank down, exhausted, obscured from the lamps' light by an erect and imposing figure in front. She was so worn! She closed her eyes for a time. She felt the train in motion; she inhaled the pungent tunnel odor; she let fate bear her on.

She roused herself to prepare for possible surprises at her destination. The figure in the seat ahead moved and took on a familiar look. Mrs. Hollis breathed faster. There was the rustle of soft silk under expensive

broadcloth, the aggravating scent of orris.

The figure turned. It was Mortie Waterman's mother. Mrs. Hollis did not start; she was conscious of an involuntary movement of her head. She could almost smile. Then, through Mrs. Waterman's square jaws, came a greeting admonitive:

"You seem rather done up."

"I have had a tiresome day in town," said Mrs. Hollis. "Shopping, even for one's own child, is a task."

"I hear your daughter has gone up in the mountains."

"Who could have told you that?"

"I understood your visit at Mrs. Gelston's was at an end."

"We have spent delightful days," said Mrs. Hollis.

"Weeks, was it not?"

Really, Mrs. Waterman was too brusque. Still, Mrs. Hollis reflected, it was better to parry at the outset. "Jane is very fond of my daughter," she murmured, gently. If Mrs. Waterman had heard they had left, why trouble to deny? But she thought of the situation when they should come to leave the train. Then, she remembered that this was a local, and she could ride on a station farther, and return. Mrs. Waterman appeared to follow her ruminations. "You change at South Norwalk, I think."

Mrs. Hollis nodded her head in assent. Did she imagine it, or was Mortie's mother so tall from the waist up? She seemed to loom. Perhaps, she was sitting on something—a wrap or a suitcase. How aggressive and formidable she was! Mrs. Hollis decided to ride by her station, and return later. The carriage would wait one more train. If not, she could hire a trap.

"I hear your daughter is devoted to auto-driving," Mrs. Waterman remarked.

Mrs. Hollis did not cease to smile. "On the contrary, she does not care for it. We have seen your son's new machine. At a distance, one can hardly judge. I hope it is safe."

"It won't blow up, if that is what worries you."

"It does not worry me." Something seemed to snap in her throat. Could she endure it ten minutes longer?

"It is a matter of temperament," said Mrs. Waterman, "whether one worries or not. I have often felt thankful I had no daughter to establish."

"You think it might prove difficult?" Mrs. Hollis's voice was pleasant.

"Well, *you* ought to know."

"My daughter is years too young."

"She has been out long enough."

"Herberta is affectionate and congenial. She would not dream of leaving me," said Mrs. Hollis, in a tone of finality.

The train slowed down. She averted her face, lest they see her from the platform. With a tremulous sense of escape, she watched Mrs. Waterman draw her furs closer around her. The train slid a little; people gathered their parcels, and stood up. It stopped. A conductor shouted, for the benefit of those going further, about the car ahead. Mrs. Waterman turned to deal a parting blow. "I am going to take Mortimer to Europe," she said, and made her way out.

Mrs. Hollis choked for an instant, then fled to the next car. Through the window, she saw Mortie's mother getting into her carriage. Mortie was not there; neither was the Gelston coachman.

Uncertain of the trains, she went on to the junction, where changes for the north were made. It was now quite dark and cold; she was chilled. It seemed to her that if she could only have a cup of tea or coffee, very hot, she would feel better. She left the station to seek a restaurant.

When she alighted from the local that had brought her back, it was after eight, and there was no one to meet her. She crossed to the opposite station, and searched in vain. Not even a public conveyance was in sight. Impatiently, she made her way down the slope and under the tracks toward the town; she would find a liveryman. It seemed to her she missed something.

She started, turned sick and faint. Where was her wrist-bag, containing her purse? She could not remember having it since buying the return ticket. She had lost it! After a time, she walked on. Of course, it would not matter about the liveryman; she could explain. She could even ask a servant to pay the man; she could have the service charged to Jane. But it was annoying, and it would seem peculiar. One must not seem peculiar with the servants. And Jane might not have returned.

She walked on. It was not so cold. Excitement had warmed her, and she had had some tea. She could walk the entire distance, she thought. Of course, once outside the town, it would be uphill and a lonely road. It was dark, too, for there was no moon.

She had never, when driving, paid much attention to the turnings; on foot, things looked different. She therefore covered much unnecessary ground, and had frequently to retrace her steps. She imagined it must be ten o'clock, or later, when she began to notice a familiar look in the tall, dark hedges. She could not have more than another half-mile to go, but she was very tired; she must pause and rest. If there were only some place where she might sit! Groping about with her gloved hands, she found the slope up to the hedge smooth and dry.

She had rested there but a few moments, when something broke the stillness—a peculiar sound. Involuntarily, she put her hand up to her cheek, as she had done that morning in driving to the station. The sound ceased, abruptly. Far up the road, she saw three glaring eyes of light. It was young Waterman's automobile. Would it continue its way, presently, and meet her? The sound began again.

Wild with the prospect, she turned and flung herself against the hedge. It yielded; she forced her way through the thorns, and dropped on the other side. There she lay, and, after endless moments, the machine clicked by and stopped once more. Her heart was beating loudly, but she could hear

the young man's clear voice saying: "I'll put one out, so that we won't be recognized. Two lights are enough."

"But it is very dark."

Fully as she was prepared for it, Mrs. Hollis felt an icy sensation when she heard her daughter's voice.

"Oh, I'll light it again when we start on the long stretch. But, just here, we don't want to be seen. Did you get your furs?"

"Yes," said Herberta. Her voice had a half-frightened ring. "I—I am afraid I didn't shut the hall-door securely."

"Oh, bother the door! What are servants for?"

"I hope mama won't be angry."

Mrs. Hollis felt herself shaking with ironical laughter. Why did they linger here? She was cold with fear, now, lest they turn back. She realized that Herberta was reluctant. But where lay any alternative? They *must* go on! She felt herself wish—and the wish grew to a desperate prayer—that they go on! At the same instant, the memory of a dream accused her—a dream of months before, when she had seemed to be with her daughter alone at the top of a very high building that was burning. Below—far below—was stretched a life-net, into which they must drop, and she was thrusting Herberta from the sill of a window into the awful space. She remembered the awakening, with her brow damp from horror.

"I ought to have left a note for mama," said Herberta.

"You don't want to go back, now?"

"No, I will not go back. It is too late."

"The old lady will forgive us," said Mortie.

"Do you think so?" Herberta's voice was tremulous.

"I know it."

"I fancied—I feared she might not like me."

"Not like you—your mother?"

"My mother! I thought you said, 'the old lady,'" Herberta faltered.

"So I did."

Mrs. Hollis smiled grimly behind the hedge.

"I wish we were not starting so late," said Herberta.

"My dearest girl, as I telephoned, I'd have been with you hours ago but for the breakdown."

"Mama must have been detained in town. If she had returned, I should not have come."

"Lucky she didn't!"

"We may meet her."

"I'll wager we don't. I'll put out all the lights."

"Oh, Mortie, don't! We might be arrested!"

"Well, she wouldn't know us with two. Isn't she near-sighted, anyway?"

"Mortie, I thought I heard a sound!"

"We'll be off now."

Mrs. Hollis held her breath.

Herberta made one last faint appeal. "Won't it be too late?"

"We'll get over before midnight, and a little money will do the rest; then, we'll take a train to New York, or stop at a hotel."

"Mortie, I—I'm getting frightened."

"It's all right now. We're off. Only trust to me."

The clicking began, the auto moved away; soon they were speeding down the road.

Mrs. Hollis sat up, shivering, with a sense of horror. Her dream had come true! She had thrust her daughter out of the window into—what abyss she knew not. She stood up, weakly. With a sudden thought came a revulsion of feeling. "Thank God!" she said, unsteadily; "she does not love him, yet—there is no danger!"

Somewhere in the still distance, a dog barked. She forced her way back through the hedge, shielding her face from the thorns, as best she could. She must resume her weary climb. She saw now that she had not much farther to go. She had to think of entering the house quietly, and guarding appearances. The die was cast. She prayed to heaven they were saved. Young Waterman had an excellent heart; he was in earnest.

When a young man, speaking to his sweetheart, calls her mother "the old lady," he is in earnest—as a rule, she thought. Yes, she would gladly be "the old lady" henceforth. It was her love for her daughter that had brought them to this pass. She had spent their fortune for Herberta. Living, traveling, entertaining—above all, dressing suitably—had cost large sums. Stocks, bonds, rents—how they had melted! And, withal, she had been so occupied that she could not attend to business matters. Naturally, people had cheated and robbed her. There was Hart. Ah, how the anguish of the past weeks would vanish from memory on the morrow, if only—if all should go well! She plodded on, conscious of her physical exhaustion, but ready to be happy.

At the entrance to the great house, she put out her trembling hand, and the door yielded. What blessed influence had controlled the girl to leave it so? No one need know how or when she had returned. She crept up the stair-case and through the dimly lighted hall, to her own room.

Dazzling sunshine was at the window when the maid brought in her morning coffee and biscuit. The clock was striking. Mrs. Hollis sat up quickly. "Is it so late?" she asked. "It can't be nine. And our appointment with the dressmaker! I wish," she added, to the servant, who waited for instructions, "you would ask Miss Hollis to come to me directly she is dressed. Say to her we shall have to hurry."

She was sipping her coffee, and glancing over the letters on the tray, when the maid returned.

"Not in her room!" Her mistress repeated the words in a tone of vexation. "Gone out so early! How very provoking! Well, never mind." She sighed, and resumed her letter-reading.

As the morning wore on, she was conscious of uneasiness. Why no word? By noon, she felt stifled. Jane Gelston still absent, she could only wait. Had Herberta refused at the last moment? Were they in the shadow of

a blighting scandal? Why didn't the telephone ring? Unable to rest, she dressed for a walk, and hurried down to the entrance door. There, she came face to face with Mortie Waterman's mother. She had forgotten to think of Mrs. Waterman.

"How very—delightful!" she gasped.

"Your agitation is hardly surprising," said Mortie's mother, through her square jaws. "You had to hurry back from Lenox, no doubt."

"Shall we not go into the house?" asked Mrs. Hollis, striving to gain composure.

"I can say all I have to say right here. James, drive down to the road, and back, directly."

"I think—" Mrs. Hollis began.

"But I don't think. When my son failed to meet me last evening, I guessed the influences detaining him."

"Your son!" said Mrs. Hollis, faintly.

"And, while the machinations have failed, and I have proof that he did not marry her, since I know where she is in New York at this moment, still, I am ready to thank all those who took any part in it."

Mrs. Hollis reached at the porch-pillar for support. A fearful pang gripped her heart. She did not utter a sound until, "Your daughter," said Mrs. Waterman; then, "What can you have to say of my daughter?"

"Oh, it is true *her* part was very small. It takes a mature woman—a woman of experience, to plan and carry out such schemes. But they have failed, thanks to the clergyman who knew me well by name, and who communicated with me, early this morning. He absolutely refused. The woman remained in the automobile. They had to ride on—to New York, no doubt. I have positive information she is there this morning—and not married."

Mrs. Hollis made no sound. She only clutched the pillar. Things swam darkly; the earth trembled under foot. And then, down the road, she heard a sound she knew—a whir-

ring sound, approaching swiftly. In through the gates rolled the vermillion auto, and up to the house.

Smiling and blushing, more beautiful than ever, was Herberta.

"Hello!" cried Mortie, springing out. "What's the row with all our 'phones? Couldn't get any of you. Mother, congratulate us!"

He started to embrace her, but she waved him off. "Where is Mrs. Gelston?" she demanded. Her voice was sonorous, inflexible. "It seems you could not marry her."

"Oh, yes, we're married, all right! Old Brooks refused. I told him there were others."

"Where is Mrs. Gelston?" his mother repeated, more sonorously.

"Why the deuce should I know—or care! Here's my wife!"

Mrs. Hollis screamed, faintly: "Herberta!"

"Come, mother, let's all be happy," said Mortie.

Mrs. Waterman had turned to beckon her coachman. "What an escape!" she murmured, hoarsely. "What a miraculous, blessed—Home, James!"

Later, Herberta showed curiosity. "But how could she think anything so absurd?" she asked. "What would lead her to think you ever cared for Mrs. Gelston?"

Mortie colored, oddly, but he also laughed. "Oh, that was all a little joke, you know."



THE OLD MAID

SHE cannot woo the man she loves—ah, no!
 She may not hint in word or song or sighs;
 She may not plead with eloquence of eyes,
 Nor with a touch of hand dare let him know;
 She should not think of him with love, although
 Her heart, in hunger, passionately cries,
 Although her woman's soul the world defies—
 Shall honor drag a human hope this low?

If she but chance to pass him on the street,
 Her heart is grateful that they sometimes meet;
 She masks emotion under calm control,
 But wears his smiles like jewels on her soul,
 And from this love, pent in her breast, draws store
 To lavish on her friends and on the poor.

ROSALIE ISABEL STEWART.



TRUTH is stranger than fiction, because we are so unaccustomed to it.



SOME ministers only practise what they preach, when, in their studies at home, they rehearse the Sunday sermon.

THE PUDDING

A MONOLOGUE

By May Isabel Fisk

N O, Mary, don't take it away; put it on the side-table, where we can see it. Half the enjoyment of a pudding is in looking at it; don't you think so, dear? You horrid thing! You won't say so when you taste my pudding.

Y-e-s, I did—out of the cook-book—all myself. Mary never touched it; I even sent her out of the kitchen, for I knew you would say I didn't make it, alone. Mary, you never saw this pudding till this minute, did you? There, now! I hope you are satisfied.

Mary, Mr. Clyde will serve the soup to-night. . . . It's because of my hands, dear; I burned them both, pretty badly. . . . Well, wasn't it better to burn them than the pudding? It has to be one or the other. . . . I don't know *why*. Why do your old stocks go up and down?

Mary, it's so hot in here, you will have to open one of the windows. . . . Well, it is, dear. If you'd been in the kitchen all day, making a pudding, you'd feel warm. . . . Oh, all right. Mary, put the window down; Mr. Clyde *thinks* he feels a draught. . . . No, of course, I don't mind.

On my nose? Oh, yes; that's just a bit of smut from the oven. I couldn't get it off. . . . Well, I didn't have time to fix my hair, and I simply couldn't change my dress, after working in that kitchen all day. . . . That? Only a little egg which spilled while I was beating them.

Mary, you will have to take the pudding out of here, and carry it down-stairs to the ice-box. The recipe

said to keep in a cool place till served, and I wouldn't risk it a moment longer in this hot room.

Certainly not, dear! I don't want the window open if you are going to take cold. You know, when you had your last attack of bronchitis, you never left this house for five mortal days! . . . I didn't mean anything of the kind, Harry; how you take me up! Of course, I *love* to have you home in the daytime—I was only thinking how *you* suffered. . . . Gracious, Mary, why are you standing there with that pudding? I told you to take it down-stairs. . . . I'm not cross, Harry, but Mary is so stupid, sometimes. . . . Oh, I can't eat any soup—I'm not hungry. . . . Now, wouldn't you think she'd had time to put that pudding in the ice-box, and be up here again? . . . I don't care; I think so. . . . Good heavens! did you hear that crash? Mary, what was that? Did you drop the pudding? . . . Only Master Georgie falling out of his crib! I thought it was the pudding, Mary. Tell him he must lie quiet till this pudding is over. Mary, wait a minute; you'd better bring it here—I'm afraid it will get chilled. . . . No, Mary, the pudding—not the baby.

Well, dear, she will bring the rest of the dinner as soon as she gets the pudding up here again. . . . What kind of a day did you have down-town? I'm glad. . . . Why, no; I haven't been out all day; I made the pudding. . . . Yes, your mother did call, but I couldn't see her. Naturally, it would have been different if it had been *my* mother. Would you

wish *your* mother to see me looking like this? . . . Yes, it was my day at home, but I never thought of it till I got in the middle of the pudding; and, then, I couldn't get out of it. I had to send word I was ill.

Why, Mary, I told you to bring the pudding first, not the dinner. You will have to carry those things down again. . . . It won't take her but a moment, dear, and I am afraid to leave the pudding a second later in too cold an atmosphere. . . . It's only because I wish you to have your pudding right; I am trying my best to please you. Yes, that's just it—the harder I try, the more—I know you didn't mean anything, Harry; I know it's your way. Now, sit still, dear. Mary will be here in a moment. . . . Well, all right; don't say anything more about it; I'm so nervous I can't stand one thing!

Mary, you really took a long while. Bring the pudding to me. It looks as if it were going down. . . . Oh, Harry, don't make such silly jokes! . . . Mary, I think if you open the window just a crack—I said just a crack, dear—and put a chair on the pudding— Now, stop, Harry! You know what I mean. . . . Of course, it looks brown—it's a brown pudding. . . . I didn't mean it was called "brown," but it's meant to look brown. The cook-book said, "cook till a rich brown." . . . Well, I don't call it black—it's a dark brown. We won't discuss it. . . . Very well. Mary, bring the dinner; Mr. Clyde is very hungry to-night.

The euchre club? It's not this evening? Well, I can't go; I don't feel at all well. Of course, you wouldn't think of going without me? . . . No, you needn't go and say I'm ill—I'm all right.

Mary, before you pass the potatoes, put the window down; not all the way—just a little further closed. . . . No, I can't eat a thing. . . . Well, I can't help it. . . . Mr. Clyde wishes more bread, Mary. You are eating a great deal to-night, aren't you, dear? . . .

Mary, you can bring me the pudding, and I will serve it while Mr. Clyde finishes his dinner—I don't know anything more to do with it. It is rather blacker—browner than I thought. Now, you know, Mary, I told you to watch it, and not let it get too rich in color. Take it down-stairs again, and make a little meringue, and then it won't show where it is burnt. . . . What? It would taste burnt just the same? I suppose it would. . . . Well, perhaps it will be all right when it's cut. Give me a spoon. . . . No, dear, it's not tough at all. It's a little solid—not too solid. Mary, just bring a knife—one of the sharp kitchen-knives. . . . No, it isn't, dear, not a bit. It never was intended to be one of those high puddings, Harry. . . . The top sticks up that way, and the rest is in the bottom, because—well, where would the top be, you silly! You can't explain why a pudding does things—nobody can. . . . Mary, it is all the fault of the eggs; you didn't beat them long enough. I knew at the time. . . . Oh, Harry, how absurd! They're raisins. There, now, eat it; don't poke it about like that. . . . No, they are not rubber rings—they are sliced bananas. . . . Now, taste it—you needn't hold your breath. (*A pause.*)

You don't like it—no, you don't! You needn't try to deceive me. . . . You do? Well, if you could see your face, you would know whether you liked it or not! You needn't say you do. I don't feel badly a bit—truly, I don't. I knew you wouldn't like it—that's why I made it. I—boo-hoo, boo-hoo! How h-h-hard I w-worked over tha—that p-p-p- pudding! Oh, dear! Boo-hoo! I w-w-wish—I w-w-ere—d-d-d-ead!—boo-hoo—boo-hoo!—a-a-and I w-w-wish you w-w-ere d-d-ead—a-and I w-w-ish we w-w-ere all d-d-ead! Boo-hoo—boo-hoo! . . . No, I d-on't! I'll l-l-live to p-p-punish y-you! I'll m-m-make y-you eat every bit of that p-p-p- pudding, and then *you* will w-wish you were dead! Boo-hoo—boo-hoo!

THE DANCE OF LIFE

OH, I am weary, weary! But the dance
How gay it was, when first we entered in!
Oh, the brave mirth of flute and violin
That swayed us, reed-like, through retreat, advance,
In all the intricate, sweet steps of sin!

Oh, I am weary! Who had thought to tire,
When first we laughed and leaned and heard the strain
Of this mad music call to heart and brain,
And touch our over-restless feet with fire,
To follow, follow in the whirling train!

Oh, I am weary! But the dance goes on,
The lights are low, the trampled blossoms dead.
I wonder me how many nights have fled;
Each dancer's face shows agonized and wan,
And some one laughs, though never word is said.

Oh, I am weary! For a little space,
Would I might rest; but, stronger than my will,
This something drives me through the measure still—
On, on, wild mockery of mirth and grace,
I would to God that weariness might kill!

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



DIFFIDENT

MISTRESS (*sternly*)—How is it, Mary, that I never hear a sound in the kitchen when you are entertaining that man?

MARY (*archly*)—Please, ma'am, you see the poor fellow is that bashful that for the present he does nothing but eat.



“THIS wireless telegraphy reminds me of a groundless quarrel.”
“What possible connection is there between the two?”
“It's practically having words over nothing.”



IF men and women married their first loves, there would be much more cynicism in the world than there now is.

WORDS AND THOUGHTS

HE said, as he sat in her theatre-box,
 Between the acts, "What beastly weather!
 How like a parrot the lover talks!
 The lady is tame, and the villain stalks—
 I hope they die together."

He thought, "You are fair as the dawn's first ray,
 And I know the angels keep watch above you;
 And so I chatter of weather or play,
 While all the time I am mad to say,
 'I love you, love you, love you!'"

He said, "The season is almost run;
 How glad we are when the whirl is ended!
 For the toil of pleasure is more than its fun,
 And what is it all, when all is done,
 But the rocket that has ascended?"

He thought, "O God, to be off somewhere
 With you, afar from this world of fashion,
 To know you were mine—and to have you care,
 And to lose myself in the crimson snare
 Of your lips, in a kiss of passion!"

He said, "You are going abroad, no doubt,
 The land of liberty coldly scorning.
 I, too, shall journey a bit about,
 From Wall street up by the L road, out
 To Harlem, and down, each morning!"

He thought, "It must follow on land or sea,
 This pent-up, passionate, dumb devotion,
 Till the cry of a rapture that may not be
 Shall reach your heart from the heart of me,
 And stir you with strange emotion!"

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



HER SOLICITUDE

HE—I'm a non-union man, myself.
 SHE—Oh, George, you don't mean to say you belong to that horrid bachelors' club?



SHE—They say she is fairly throwing herself at his head.
 HE—I suppose she's heard he's a good catch!

A MAN OF SOME IMPORTANCE

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

LADY FELICE COZENS extended her hand in greeting.

"Ah, Mr. Frank, I never expected to see you here; but, then, I presume you jewelers are as familiar with Paris as with London. Have you something that will interest me? My collection of emeralds is still incomplete."

"I am not in business."

"Indeed!" Lady Felice's eyebrows were raised in a questioning manner.

"Yes, yes; and I know you wonder at my impertinence in coming to see you."

"It is no impertinence, I assure you," responded Lady Felice; "but you must promise to find me the twenty-fourth emerald for my necklace. Even if you are no longer in business, you will take that commission from me, will you not?"

"Ah, yes; gladly, my lady."

"Thank you, very much. It has to be—but come with me to-morrow to my banker's, and I will show you what you will have to match."

"At what hour, my lady?"

"Let me see. Ah, yes! In the morning, I shall go riding in the Bois with Monsieur de Freycinet; then, I must go to Sara's for my new gowns; to Lalique's, to see how my shoulder-straps are progressing; to Ferdinand's; to Cambon's; to Andre's. Oh, yes! I shall have plenty of time to take you in the morning. I would suggest your meeting me at half-after eleven, here." Lady Felice sprang to her feet, and ran to the window opening upon the balcony. She clapped her hands.

"Oh, how droll!" she exclaimed. "Run, Mr. Frank, to the cabinet in

the corner. You will find a big bag of confetti. Bring it to me."

Felice threw back the long windows, and stepped upon the balcony. Her apartment was on a great boulevard, and below, on the pavement, a crowd passed and repassed, making gay for the short day of *mi-carême*.

"Here, my lady," said Frank, holding out the bag.

"Good, good!" Felice exclaimed, and took the bag from him, thrusting her dainty hand within it.

"*Vive la mi-carême!*" she cried, gaily, as she flung bits of scintillating paper into the air. The passing crowd gazed up at the fair, slender woman who stood on the iron balcony.

"*Vive la mi-carême!*" a student shouted, in answer. "*Vive la madame glorieuse!*" he added, boldly.

"*Vive les étudiants!*" she quickly responded. A group of merry youngsters gathered beneath her windows, and cried up to her in admiration. Still, her restless hand scattered confetti over the crowd clamoring below.

"*La procession!*" the people cried; and all eyes turned eagerly toward the broad expanse of the boulevard.

The Spring winds blew fitfully down the streets. Cascades of confetti poured from the windows and balconies, and the tender sunshine turned them into a brilliant, shimmering mass of wonderful colors. Through the streets, the tiny disks were whirled ceaselessly by the light breeze.

"How beautiful life is!" Felice whispered to Mr. Frank.

"It is, indeed, madame," he answered. Then, he slyly drew a bag of confetti from beneath his coat,

and joined her in casting it over the crowd.

When the mounted Republican Guard swept down the boulevard, Felice drew back, poised for a careful throw, and sent a great handful of confetti shimmering over the men. A lucky current of wind caught it, and carried it over to the farthest horseman in the rank. The horses plunged, startled by the bits of flying paper.

"*La reine, la reine! Vive la reine de mi-carême!*" shouted the people. Then, the great float, on which sat the pretty *blanchisseuse* chosen by the people as their queen, went slowly by. The girl's sweet, pert face was wreathed with smiles, as she bowed here and there. As some unusually clever remark was hurled at her from the crowd, she would turn and answer in the *argot* of the Paris streets. To be the queen of the Paris carnival of *mi-carême*, one must possess wit as well as beauty.

Lady Felice laughed gaily, and bandied phrases with the groups of students beneath her balcony. At last, her confetti was all gone. For a second, she looked drolly unhappy. Then, she turned to her drawing-room, and caught up a great bunch of roses from a table. These she threw, one by one, to the merry, laughing, happy students.

"Brave boys!" she cried; "may you be happy!"

The leader of the students struck an attitude, kissed his rose, and thrust it within his waistcoat.

"Madame," he called, in the clear, strong tenor voice of youth, "I am a Gascon. So, I shall cherish forever and ever the rose you have given me. Deep in my heart will remain the tender, delightful memory of this day, in which a beauty was kind to a struggling student. Madame, I pray you accept my thanks," and he bowed low; "also, the thanks of these, my fellow-students." He bowed again to Lady Felice.

Just then, a vender of "*dirigibles*," as the imitations of a modern airship are known, appeared on the corner.

The students swept toward him, divested him of his stock, and rushed off down the boulevard, laughing and chattering as only irresponsible youth can do at such a time.

Lady Felice stood on her balcony, the soft Spring sun beating upon the great masses of black hair that crowned her shapely head. She was laughing and humming, beating time with the toe of her slippered foot. But, when she turned again to the drawing-room, Mr. Harry Frank, late jeweler, of Bond street, London, was no longer there.

"The collection of emeralds is complete, madame," Mr. Harry Frank told her, when they met again.

"I am disappointed," she declared, "for I shall now have to begin collecting something else. Can you not give me some advice? Do you not collect anything?"

Mr. Harry Frank smiled, grimly. "Lady Felice Cozens will not be surprised when I tell her that my first hobby was the collecting of—money; she may be surprised when she learns that my second hobby is collecting honors, and the establishment of a social position."

"*Vraiment?*" Lady Felice's voice was caressing and low.

"Indeed!" he responded.

"When did you begin?" she asked. "You see, I have not been in London for three years; I have been in Paris only six months. The remainder of the time I was at Buenos Aires, with my relatives."

"I began two years since, Lady Felice. I am Baron François d'Algara."

"Of the Vatican?"

"No, of Portugal. My cousin, Emanuel, is head of the great Lisbon banking house of Da Cunha, Feira & Company. He attended to my ennobling."

"So, now, you are in quest of social distinction? Then, why have you come to me? You see how simply I live—how little I have to do with society, here."

The Baron François d'Algara laughed, softly.

"Lady Felice lives quietly; then, it is the most proper thing to do. The very great people are living exclusively; it is only the *nouveaux* who are ostentatious." The ex-jeweler, of Bond street, did not class himself with the *nouveaux*.

"You are apt," said Felice, gravely. "The very great people are living simply for the present. But they live simply, because they are great. You could not do so! What is social retirement for a Duchesse de Uzès, would be oblivion for a Baron d'Algara. You must keep yourself before the public eye. They will call you a *nouveau*; well, you are one. After a while, they will forget that you are a newcomer. But you will be very clever to accomplish that effect."

"It is far different from selling jewels," the baron said.

"Not at all; for the main idea is to dispose of something you have in return for what you have not. When you sold gems, you received money—gold. When you wish to obtain social recognition, you sell certain things to the people who can make you a social success."

"Quite true, quite true," murmured the baron. Then, he raised his dark, Oriental eyes to Felice's.

"I am about to ask a straight question. Will you advise my social campaign?"

"It might prove amusing," replied Felice. Then, she laughed. "Go to the bookcase, and bring me the *Almanach de Gotha*."

The baron obeyed in wonderment. She turned to a page, and looked at it, critically.

"There are three South American republics which are not represented in Paris by diplomatic representatives. If you were a minister from any one of these three tiny independent states, you would have an assured social position. A trip to South America, where the banking house of Da Cunha, Feira & Company has many branches, might result in your being

appointed the minister from San Zaldivor, or Maraguay. The post would be without salary, of course, but the honor would be great. As an accredited minister, you would be on terms of equality with all the great people of Paris. You would enter the clubs—the Cercle de l'Union, the Cercle of the Rue Royale, the Cercle Agricole; and, if you kept a string of racing horses, you might ultimately attain the Jockey Club."

"I shall leave for Maraguay on the first steamer from Genoa," responded the baron. "Da Cunha financed the last Maraguan loan in the Paris and Berlin Bourses, and I shall have no trouble in making the necessary arrangements."

Lady Felice was the widow of Sir Henry Mardigate Cozens, who had served for many years in the diplomatic service of his country, with varying successes. An unusually clever man, he had invariably been stationed at posts where nothing but a polite interchange of social courtesies was required of him. The minute he was transferred from one unimportant post to one seemingly more important, something was bound to occur in the vacated post which would have made Sir Henry famous.

When forty, and bald as God will permit a man to be, he received orders which carried him to Buenos Aires. In that extremely gay capital, Sir Henry met his fate in the person of Señorita Felice Vasco y Velasquez, the heiress of considerable Argentine realty and innumerable herds of cattle on the River Platte.

When the news reached London that Sir Henry, noted a bachelor for many years, had at last come under the softening influence of love, consternation reigned supreme. His family, rigid Scotch folk, strong in the religion of John Knox, were indignant that Sir Henry should have married a papist. But, with the characteristic shrewdness of the Scotch, they made inquiries as to the tangibility of the fair Felice's property. Being

duly satisfied that their beloved Henry, was marrying well, from a material point of view, the Cozens family made only an inarticulate disapproval of his bride.

But, before Lady Felice had ruled the British legation five months, Sir Henry Mardigate Cozens betook himself to the narrow and rigid confines of his grave, and left the fair Felice a widow, an heiress, and a member of the English baronetage.

She was a very handsome woman, with an innocent manner which effectually concealed her very clever wits. Appealing by nature, she flattered most men into believing that she was trusting them. It took the keen Hebraic eye of Mr. Harry Frank, later Baron François d'Algara, to discover the fact that Lady Felice could advise men, instead of being advised by them.

When she had given advice to him, she promptly proceeded to forget his existence. He called several times in the two days prior to his departure from Paris; but she was always out. So, his last farewell was a wilderness of rare orchids, sent from the most expensive Parisian florists.

A year later, Felice again appeared in Paris, and settled down for only a week's stay at the Ritz. She was traveling quite *en suite*, with a secretary and a private chaplain, in addition to her three maids. The year had been spent in many different places, and in many different ways. She had suffered eight proposals of marriage in the interim, and had refused all.

Lady Felice had ordered Brexnor Hall put in shape for occupancy, and her stay in Paris was merely for the completion of the toilette with which she would startle the families of Hants.

"The Maraguayan minister has called," her maid informed her, on the close of the second afternoon.

Felice wrinkled her brows. She did not remember the Maraguayan minister in Paris, though she had met the amiable gentleman who represented

the Maraguayan Republic at Berlin, and who was known by a glittering princely title bestowed by the Pope.

On the third day, the Maraguayan minister called again, and Lady Felice was out. The fourth afternoon, the incident was repeated; on the fifth, she remained in.

"His excellency, the minister of Maraguay," announced the footman. Following him was a tall, rather distinguished figure, clad in irreproachable fashion.

"Oh, Baron François d'Algara!" cried Felice, suddenly recalling the ex-jeweler of Bond street. "So, you took my advice?" she queried.

"Yes," he answered; "I am now a man of some importance. I am the Maraguayan minister. Several foreign nations have conferred orders of knighthood upon me, and I am a knight of the Legion d'Honneur, the Order of Isabella the Catholic, and the Portuguese Order of Christ."

"But how? Are you still a Jew?"

"I am. But I am also a free-thinker, so that my conscience did not impel me to refuse the Order of Christ."

"Do you entertain much?" asked Lady Felice.

"In my house, on the rue de Balzac, I give weekly dinners, of twelve covers. Artistic and literary Paris is always represented. A few *grandes dames* are among my guests; cabinet ministers and my fellow-members of the Diplomatic Corps make up the balance."

"Quite good! You are progressing."

"And I hope that my dinner next week may be in your honor."

"You may arrange with my secretary," replied Lady Felice; "she knows what time I have free."

The very cosmopolitan gentleman who was Maraguayan minister at Paris immediately sent out invitations for a dinner in honor of Lady Felice Cozens. The night of his dinner followed a very sensational victory on the French turf, when one of the horses raced by the Maraguayan minister had won the Grand Prix. The baron was in excellent spirits, and his dinner-table

was decorated in the colors of his stable—scarlet, green and gold.

The dinner was small, but the guests included the president of the Jockey Club, the British ambassador and his wife, a reigning princess from a German state, and a few less notable persons. The Maraguayan minister, flushed with his triumphs on the turf, with his small and brilliant company at dinner, his diplomatic rank and his great wealth, seemed, indeed, to have achieved the highest point of ambition. Mr. Harry Frank had, indeed, become a man of importance. The Paris papers daily noted the comings and goings of the baron. A small company of satellites thronged at the morning levee which the baron held. A minor poet dedicated a book of verse to him, acclaiming him the successor of Lorenzo de' Medici as a patron of the arts.

Yet, Harry Frank was dissatisfied. His ambition did not bring happiness. That is too common a condition in life.

Not until the night of his dinner did the baron realize what was lacking. His years had been spent in a single-handed combat against the social world. A bachelor from choice during the first years of his life, the habit became a confirmed one as time passed by. He never thought of marriage. He left it to others to wed and be happy.

Lady Felice was radiant. Her wonderful gown, its corsage wreathed with blood-colored flowers, enhanced the remarkable clarity of her skin, and the darkness of her hair. A small necklace was her only ornament, but each stone which formed it was a clear and priceless ruby.

"I shall start a stable of my own!" she cried. She was talking to the president of the Jockey Club, the bearer of one of the greatest names in France.

"Indeed, madame, everything would be lost to you," the duke gallantly assured her.

"Perhaps," Felice laughed; "but I shall try the experiment. I shall take black and red for my colors."

"Prince Souarov already uses those colors," interposed the duke.

"Then, let them be gold, with alternate stripes of black and red."

"That would be extremely artistic," declared the duke. "But under what name would you race your horses?"

"Mr. Brexton will do. That is the name of my estate in England. Or shall I call myself Mr. Vasco?"

"Mr. Brexton is the better," the duke replied.

As the baron gaily talked to the German Princess of Swarzbouurg-Hindelsstein, he watched Felice. The German woman was not beautiful, nor was she clever. But she soon saw that the baron's eyes rested upon the animated face just at his left.

"She is very, very beautiful," the princess said, in a low voice. Baron François flushed deeply.

"And you are an old bachelor, eh?" significantly remarked the princess.

"But what can I do?" he asked. "Would such a woman care for such a man as I? Oh, no! it would be hopeless for me."

"It is never hopeless," answered the princess.

"But I am a Jew," the baron answered.

"There are worse things than being a Jew," the princess retorted. The reigning house of Swarzbouurg-Hindelsstein owed much to that same masterful Da Cunha, whose monetary schemes seemed to embrace half the thrones of Europe.

The princess's words fell on fallow ground, and the Baron François d'Algara thought much over them. They were freighted with sympathy. Perhaps, after all, there was an opportunity.

The peaceful condition of several South American states is easily disturbed. A trifle will upset two or three republics, and plunge them into a strife, which, seen from a distance, appears merely theatrical; but, at close range, it may often be bitter and real, indeed. There are not many people killed in South American wars,

but that is due to the inferior quality of courage among the common people. The leaders of the revolutionary movements have sufficient courage, and are sanguine enough to wipe every country off the face of the globe.

Maraguay is usually not troubled oftener than every ten years. The last revolution had occurred only four years back, and matters had progressed very peacefully. The foreign commerce of the country was steadily increasing. The ever-active English and Germans had just jumped into Metaro, the capital, and were obtaining concessions and establishing industries. A promoter from North America had bought up a few thousand acres for a coffee plantation. Maraguay was on the high road to commercial success.

But the disturbing element appeared in the shape of a cousin of the French minister to Maraguay. He desired a concession for the construction of a railroad line running from Metaro to Helamo, a point three hundred miles inland, and the scene of late discoveries of gold ore.

Exactly what occurred will never become known, but the president of Maraguay slapped the face of the minister from France, and the nephew of the minister threw a bottle of ink in the president's face. The last was an unpardonable insult, as the president's color bordered on the dark, even after a lavish ablution.

The president cabled—charges collect—for the Baron François d'Algara, to ask for his passports from the French government. The baron was instructed to leave in "high displeasure." When the cablegram reached the baron, he was still in bed. His successes of the day previous seemed a little vague and forgotten. But the determination to plead his cause with Lady Felice was strong in his mind.

When he read the indignant cablegram which President Maldonado had penned at Metaro, d'Algara felt the ground slipping from beneath his

feet. He knew the loss of his diplomatic status at Paris would entail the loss of his social position, to a great extent. So, he immediately telegraphed President Maldonado, stating that matters could be temporized.

This done, he went to the Ritz, and called for Lady Felice Cozens. He was taken to her private parlor, a little apartment smelling like a florist's shop. There were flowers in every conceivable receptacle.

"My friends are very kind," remarked Felice, when she entered. "There has not been a day when I have not had a dozen boxes of flowers." Then, she noticed that the baron appeared constrained.

"What has gone wrong?" she asked. D'Algara handed her President Maldonado's cablegram.

"Temporize with him," advised Lady Felice. "You cannot afford to lose your billet just now. You are beginning to 'arrive,' as the French say."

"I have endeavored to temporize."

"Then await consequences."

D'Algara waved his hand. "Those matters are not very important to me, this morning," he said. "My mission here is of another import. I am, as you know, a bachelor. I have never married. Why, I cannot tell, except that my heart has never been touched. In the old London days, a hundred different alliances were proposed to me; but I preferred to remain single. You know that is strange among the Jews; we are a marrying race. Last night, I realized that the hand of fate had kept me from an early marriage. I know it is utter folly for me to love you, but I offer you my whole affection—"

"No, no!" interrupted Lady Felice; "I am perfectly happy as a widow."

"It is because I am a Jew?" the baron asked, bitterly.

"Oh, no; I have no religious prejudices."

"Then, it is because you do not care for me."

"It is not exactly that," murmured Lady Felice.

The baron turned abruptly to her, and wooed her in the strange, fierce manner of the Hebrew. The words he spoke were high-colored, exotic, and his metaphors reeked of the wonderful imagination of Judaism. But, still, she refused him.

"Do not dispute it; you refuse me because I am a Jew," he cried, passionately.

"No. For that matter, I am a Jew, myself."

"You? you a Jew? Oh, no; you are a Catholic."

"I was a Catholic for social reasons, just as you are a diplomat. In the first place, my father was the greatest land-owner in a certain section of Argentine. He and my brother both died when I was a little child, and I was brought up by my aunt, who had married a Catholic. Then I married Sir Henry, and, after his death, came to England. I was very wealthy. I wished social distinction. It was not open to a Jewess; but to a South

American Catholic, with millions, nothing was closed."

"Then, you will marry me, after all!" François laughed, gaily.

"According to the Jewish rites," she murmured.

"I belong to the West London Synagogue of British Jews, in Berkley street," the baron said, "and its rabbi has been a lifelong friend."

Lady Felice's maid came into the parlor, after a discreet knock at the door.

"The bell-boy has a cablegram for the Maraguayan minister," she said.

"Send it in," ordered Lady Felice.

When d'Algara opened it, his features contorted into an expression, half-smile, half-rage.

"Maraguay has declared war upon France," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"What of it?" Lady Felice laughed. "We can live in London, and there will not be any trouble about social recognition."



THE LETTER

SILENCE and separation, and the ache—
 Restless and dumb—of the desire to see
 One face alone of all humanity!
 O Absence, how we suffer for your sake!
 How needlessly! Had we the strength to take
 Our lives between our hands, and shake them free
 Of all the dull world's stupid tyranny,
 What masterworks of living we might make!

But, now, they bring to me, where I repine,
 A letter from the loved one. O my sweet!
 Your hands have touched the little, scented sheet,
 And your deep voice vibrates in every line!—
 The joy of reading love is so complete,
 I think that absence must be half-divine!

ELSA BARKER.



BOGGS—When will Senator Sorghum ever do anything for the purifying of politics?
 NOGGS—The day he retires to private life.

DEFERRED

GRAY hairs show at my temples;
 Yes, I shall settle down.
 Farewell, beloved bohemia—
 No more painting the town!
 Girls who have loved and left me,
 Girls whom I've loved and left,
 Truly, *my* heart's not broken:
 Tell me, are you bereft?

Tess had a smile bewitching;
 Polly was passing fair;
 Rose had a shapely ankle;
 Nell had glorious hair;
 Greta, blue-eyed and tender,
 Loved me in student days—
 We met, we kissed and we quarreled,
 We've gone our several ways.

So, then, an end to trifling!
 I've burned their ribbons and gloves,
 Letters, tresses and trinkets—
 Relics of bygone loves.
 No more with transient sweethearts
 Shall I pursue delight.
 Stay! there is one exception—
 That sweet girl I met last night!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



TRUE

PENFIELD—Why do you always select books by new writers?

MERRITT—Because, unless an unknown author's stuff were fairly good, it would never be published.



AMPLE INJURY

JUDGE—Then, sir, when you were being assaulted, why did you not call for an officer?

WITNESS—Call a policeman, your honor? Wasn't I assaulted sufficiently as it was?